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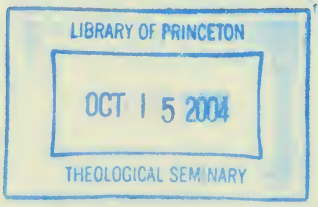

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Rev.d David M.c Nicoll.

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THE WORKS

OF

THE REV. DAVID M'NICOLL:

INCLUDING HIS

POETICAL REMAINS.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

BY THE REV. JAMES DIXON.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

Mr. M'Nicoll has left no journal, or papers of any description, by which his experience as a Christian, or his habits of study as a man of letters, might be traced.

In consequence of this want of information, the Memoirs are necessarily defective, unworthy of their subject, and, it is feared, must greatly disappoint the expectations of his numerous friends, and the public.

Biography ought to be a faithful portrait of the departed, to speak his language, and to exhibit his opinions: This, however, can never be effectually accomplished, except through the medium of documents from his own pen. The dead are often the mere mouth-piece of the living, and made to give utterance to sentiments not their own. No attempt of that kind has been made on this occasion; and all that remained was, the collection of such fragments as could be met with, illustrative of the mental power, the religious experience, and the ministerial labours, of this eminent man.

J. D.

Liverpool,
November 28th, 1836.

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PRINCETON
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MEMOIRS

OF

THE REV. DAVID M'NICOLL.

David M'Nicoll was born at Dundee, July 17th, 1781. His father is uniformly represented, by those who recollect him, to have been a simple-hearted, pious, and useful class-leader in the Wesleyan Society; and his mother, a woman of strong mind, and of thoughtful and sober habits of piety. Of this excellent mother he was accustomed to speak with much feeling. "When only six years of age she used frequently to kneel down with him at his bed-side, and sometimes for hours together fervently commend him in prayer to Almighty God." To those who find it wearisome to spend any time either in private or public devotions, this fact may appear questionable. But it must be recollected, that it relates to Scotch Christians, who, in the best periods of their history, have been celebrated for the length as well as the sober fervour of their religious exercises. No doubt, biblical, catechetical, and oral instructions formed a part of these domestic duties. It is not likely, that hours should be spent with a child in prayer only. But, accompanied by instruction in the knowledge of the great facts and principles of our holy religion, nothing could be more calculated to make a salutary impression, and lead the youthful mind to serious reflection, and, ultimately, to the enjoyment of religion, than this maternal tenderness and piety. How sweet and soothing must have been the recollection of these scenes! A mother's love, instructions, and prayers, are not soon forgotten by any, and never by those on whom they have left the impress of religion.

The vast influence of female excellence on families, is most obvious. The spirit, the conversation, the prudence of mothers, the discipline which they maintain, the walk with God which

they exhibit, their familiar lessons of instruction, and, especially, their devotions, must create a moral atmosphere in their households, pregnant with life and health. The tender plants which grow around them must, from the passive pliancy of their infant state, take their moral impress from those parental influences so constantly, and almost irresistibly, operating on their yielding spirits.

The recorded instances of eminent characters, who have owed both their mental greatness, and their moral excellency, to the superior intelligence and religious assiduity of their mothers, are very numerous. Few infant minds are strong enough to resist the blighting influence of folly, passion, frivolity, and sin, constantly pressing on their attention and senses at home; and, on the other hand, few are so feeble as not to display a marked superiority when favoured with the opposite advantages. The causes of mental and moral phenomena, as developed in human character, are not easily accounted for; but the fact is, that few men of great qualities of any description have appeared on the theatre of human life, whose eminence is not traceable to maternal influence. David M'Nicoll is an instance; for, although his father is reported by all who knew him to have been a most pious and exemplary man, yet it is very evident, that he owed his great qualities chiefly to the natural endowments and pious exertions of his mother. The narrow circumstances of the elder M'Nicolls would not allow them to give their son any other education than such as could be obtained at a common night-school. With this small assistance, and the instruction he procured at home, he soon, however, began to surmount the difficulties of his station, and in early life gave indications of mental superiority. His brother attests this fact; and, after referring to the inability of their parents to afford their son a regular education, remarks: "This was partly obviated by his own extraordinary thirst for knowledge. It was easy to see in his early childhood a degree of intelligence far beyond his years. When a mere boy, his propensity for books was perfectly insatiable; he searched for them as for hidden treasure; and, when procured, their contents were literally devoured. Being blessed with a retentive memory, his mind thus became a vast storehouse of knowledge, which in variety and extent has seldom been equalled in a youth of his age." Besides this thirst for general knowledge, some of those mental tastes and qualities

which distinguished him in subsequent life now began to bud. The love of poetry and music was inherent in his nature. He could, indeed, enjoy little benefit from instruction; yet, in his lowly circumstances, he beheld all the forms of beauty presented to his attention by nature, with deep feeling, and listened to her voice with sensations of delight.

In respect of music, our young friend enjoyed one means of gratification; though, from its humble sphere, it could only afford him a very mediocre kind of assistance. But one of the qualities of true genius is, to surmount difficulties in the acquisition of the noble objects of its pursuit. Some persons of delicate and cultivated taste may not, perhaps, accord to Mr. M'Nicoll the praise of a refined knowledge of the science of music; but as he has often ministered to the gratification and solace of his personal friends in every place where he has sojourned, they will expect, that, in the cheerful buoyancy of youth, with a mind unclouded with care, and a heart beating high with benevolence and joy, this would be found amongst his earliest pleasures. Accordingly, the Rev. John Stephens remarks: "In the year 1800 I was appointed to labour in the Dundee Circuit, with the late Rev. William Fenwick. I had not been long there before my attention was fixed on 'little David,' as he was familiarly called by our friends in his native town. He was young, small, short, round-faced, with a ruddy complexion, eyes beaming with benignity, softened by the shade of his dark, shaggy eye-brows, and a forehead indicating more than ordinary intelligence. His voice was singularly melodious; and as his pious father was the leader of the singing in our chapel, assisted by several members of his family and other friends, David had full scope for the exercise of his musical talents, in the worship and praise of Almighty God. This, I have often thought, was a great mercy; for, such was his passionate fondness for singing, in addition to his fine voice, that, had it not been for the influence of religion, it is probable, he might have been engaged, in after-life, as too many similarly gifted persons are, in strewing flowers and diffusing fragrance on the path which leads multitudes to eternal ruin. From this snare he was saved, by the blessing of God on the instructions, prayers, and example of his worthy parents, connected with the ministration of the Gospel in our chapel."

The apprehension expressed by Mr. Stephens is one of extremely probable occurrence. In addition to his poetic taste,

love of music, and passion for dramatic writing, as well as for scenic exhibitions, he possessed such an exuberance of spirits, powers of conversation, and fascination and glow of expression, as made him, in private life, an universal favourite. The temptations of his youth must have been very great; and, had it not been for the providential circumstances of his situation, the salutary restraints of parental instruction and example, and, especially, the softening and attractive power of Divine grace, nothing could be more likely than that from this point he would have diverged into "the path of the destroyer," and have spent his life in making mirth for madness, as David played on his harp to Saul, instead of proclaiming "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God."

That portion of life which lies between childhood and man's estate is, in the case of all, a period of both peril and hope. It is the spring-tide of human existence; and buds then begin to burst forth which mark, with some degree of certainty, the qualities of the fruits to be expected in riper age. The understanding then begins to develope its powers; passion, its force; taste, its tendencies. It is pre-eminently the time of moral probation. It is a kind of paradise, in which the "tree of good and evil" is seen to grow in all its tempting luxuriance, whilst the youthful probationer is forbidden to eat on the one hand, and yet constantly and powerfully solicited on the other. During this brief period, the die is usually cast for life. Passion and sin break through all restraints; hurry the inexperienced victim into scenes of frivolity, dissipation, and profligacy; and fasten, like furies, on his enfeebled and prostrate spirit; or, on the other hand, knowledge, truth, principle, and especially religion, win the soul to their homage, and place it in the path of life. The vanity of this period is one of its most ensnaring evils. Because the youth finds himself in possession of the form and stature of a man, he imagines that he is one in reality. Ignorance and inexperience are never accompanied by modesty, because that which produces modesty is knowledge. Intoxicated by passion, inflated by hope, dazzled by ambition, and ignorant both of his own weakness, and the evils which lurk in his path, the dizzy youth, despite of caution and admonition, plunges into the vortex of sin, from whence, without a miracle of mercy, he can never be extricated. No limit, indeed, can be set to the force of truth, or to the power of Divine grace; and, doubtless, some

of the brightest ornaments of religion have been brought under its sanctifying influence in later life. But if vicious propensities are permitted to gain the ascendant; if the seeds of immorality to be sown by a false system of education, and unbridled freedom of action be allowed; if wicked companionships be formed, and the polluting influence of fashionable pleasure indulged; then, in the natural order of things, the mind must become like a tree scathed and blighted by lightning: It may retain its form, but it will be stripped of the verdure of religion and virtue. David M'Nicoll was mercifully preserved through this state of trial; and though it may be easily imagined, from the sprightliness of his character, that he would be exposed to much danger, yet there is no evidence that he fell into any kind of outward vice.

This circumstance, however, did not render the mercy of the Gospel unnecessary; and his conversion to God took place at an early period. This change embraces several distinctive qualities, much higher than the incipient dawning and influences of Divine grace as manifested in virtuous childhood. It appears from the testimony of unquestionable witnesses, that he exhibited in early youth all the excellencies of renewing and experimental piety. His brother states, "From a child he had known the Scriptures, like Timothy of old, and found, that they, through the Divine blessing, were able to make him wise to salvation. He was eminently a youth of prayer. I, who was his bed-fellow at that time, can distinctly speak to this. After family devotion, when he retired, it is still with admiration and delight I think of the ardour—the suppressed ardour—of his feelings, when besieging the throne of grace. It reminds me of Jacob, who said, 'I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me.' A very honourable and unexpected testimony to this trait in his early piety, was borne last year in the chapel of this town: An aged and pious minister of the Independent denomination, from the country, very kindly accepted an invitation to preach a sermon for the Methodist sabbath-school; and, in the course of the sermon, took occasion to remark, 'I am not much acquainted with the Methodists; but I knew at least one whose name there can be no indelicacy in mentioning here; that is, David M'Nicoll, who was a man of prayer, and who had a praying boy. Betwixt his house and that of a friend of mine the partition was so thin, that almost any sound might be heard.

By this means my friend was the unseen witness of the devotion of this little boy, which was sometimes so intense as though his heart would burst.'—In fact, I may sum up all in one word: Up to the time of his leaving home, there was not a single blot in his character. How his life has redeemed the pledge held out by so promising a youth and boyhood, his relatives, the church, and God can tell."

How far this preservation from outward vice, devotedness to the external services of religion, and spirit of prayer, stood connected with saving faith and the regenerate state, does not appear; but if they are not to be estimated as evidences of this higher grace, they must be considered as proofs of spiritual illumination and awakening; and also as constituting an admirable preparation of mind for the clear and bright manifestation of "Christ in him the hope of glory."

No information has come to hand respecting the time and circumstances attending Mr. M'Nicoll's attainment of adopting love, and its attendant "witness of the Spirit." But as the outspread branches of the oak are a certain evidence, that, at some remote period, the acorn has been deposited in the earth, so when the unquestionable graces and virtues of the Christian character are exhibited through a long life, and subjected to almost every variety of test, it is an infallible indication, that, at some period, the new creation has taken place. In consequence of the mental world lying beyond the reach of sensible observation, and the soul being so differently constituted, as to allow of a variety of operations producing similar religious effects; the mysterious nature of spiritual influence itself; and also the free, and, in a certain sense, the sovereign manner in which the Holy Spirit "takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us;" no invariable rule can be laid down regarding the circumstances and the manner of the believer's entrance into the family and kingdom of God. The essential elements of the work of grace must always, and in every individual, be the same; but the *modus* may, as to its precise course, vary. This being allowed, it must be equally obvious that the line of demarcation betwixt guilt and justification; "the old man" with his deeds of sin, and the "new man created in righteousness and true holiness," accompanied by the witness and opening beauties and fruits of the Spirit, is so distinctive, vital, and clear, that it is impossible to pass from the one state into the

other, without the consequences being powerfully felt and vividly portrayed on the soul and character.

Mr. Stephens remarks, respecting Mr. M'Nicoll's case:— "Of the circumstances attending his conversion, I have no distinct recollection; but of the fact I was fully satisfied. On conversing freely with him, I found him humble, simple, pious, and devoted." It is to be deplored that Mr. M'Nicoll, like many other persons of great discrimination, knowledge, accuracy, and enlargement of mind, as well as depth of experience, was not disposed to speak of the "deep things of God" relating to himself. This is to be lamented, now that he is no more, because, in addition to the satisfaction which it would have given to his friends, it pleases God to instruct his people by the testimony of those who have been profoundly taught by his truth. But though his surviving friends have not the pleasure to dwell on his sayings, in attestation of the grace of God which was with him, yet they have a much more satisfactory testimony,—a life of cheerful, active, benevolent, and useful piety. The radiations of external holiness are a proof of the light of the Divine countenance shining on the heart: The fruits of the Spirit, clustering on the character, in beauty, ripeness, and utility, show that the "tree has been made good:" And the peace, power, and love of religion exemplified in life and death, are a certain indication that the principle of faith, reposing on the cross, exists in the soul. This language is more intelligible than profession, and more impressive too; and it is delightful, in tracing the course of Mr. M'Nicoll from his earliest days to the close of life, to find, that, however his state might vary, yet he never deviated from the narrow path, but "shone brighter and brighter to the perfect day."

Mr. M'Nicoll's induction into the Christian ministry was somewhat sudden and irregular. Though pious, studious, and gifted, he had not passed through that preparatory process which is always deemed requisite in the body of Christians to which he belonged. He appears in this, as in many other events connected with his life, to have attained, by an exertion of genius, or an extraordinary interposition of Providence, to that eminence which others are obliged to reach by the slow progress of art and industry. He had, indeed, received some kind attention and instruction on the subject from Mr. Stephens; but he had few or no opportunities of

exercising his talents in public, till he was actually called into the work of the regular ministry. Mr. Stephens remarks on this :—"There seemed to be something in him which told me he would probably be called to preach the Gospel, and there was a corresponding impression on his own mind. Hence my intercourse with him was, indeed, feebly, but sincerely, directed to train him up for the service of God, in the sacred and responsible work of the Christian ministry. I often took him into my humble study, lent him books, gave him some notion of sermonizing, and inculcated upon him the necessity of lowly waiting for a clear call both from God and man.

"In the year 1801, I was re-appointed to the Dundee Circuit. Still residing in the same town with my young friend, still loving him as a son, and he still loving me as a father, while I greatly rejoiced to see him walking in the truth, and, by the blessing of God on his studies, his profiting appearing in all things; he increased in various knowledge, he grew in grace, and his conviction that it was his duty to call sinners to repentance gathered strength.

"In the year 1802, I was again stationed in the Dundee Circuit, but resided in Arbroath. My colleague, the late Rev. John Saunderson, was to reside at Dundee. He came: He preached one sabbath: He was seized with the typhus fever, and, before the next sabbath, was in his coffin. This early and sudden death of Mr. Saunderson made a providential opening for my young friend to leave his secular avocations and enter on the work of the ministry. I heard him preach his first sermon, in a small room inhabited by a pious old female now in glory. I believe I am the only person living who was present on that occasion. The conclusion of those who heard him was, *This modest, humble lad has preaching in him, if we can only get it out!* But, compared with his later and more matured pulpit-eloquence, it served to teach me, amongst many other lessons, never to despise the day of small and feeble things. After consulting our leading friends in the Circuit, and our Fathers in the ministry, whose official business it was to decide, I was authorized to call him out to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Mr. Saunderson, and to make the work as easy and as pleasant to my young friend as possible, by an amicable arrangement with my worthy brethren in a neighbouring Circuit. His labours during this first year were not without fruit, and were, I

believe, universally acceptable. I need not inform those who knew Scotland at that period, that for so young a man, who had not been blessed with a collegiate education, and who had spent his previous life in secular employments, to obtain the approval of our pious, respectable, and judicious friends in his native town and neighbourhood, must have been a strong recommendation to the subsequent Conference. So it was thought by the preachers, and therefore they regularly called him into our work."

Thus was our young friend fairly launched on the rough sea of public life. The paternal kindness of his affectionate friend, his counsels and advice, his instructions as to the best method of study and preaching, together with those cautions and exhortations to pious devotedness and diligent duty which he would not fail to add to all the rest, were a great advantage, and constituted his stock of preparation for the most arduous and important work in which man can be employed. Like the majority of the Wesleyan ministers, he had not enjoyed the advantages of a literary or theological education; he had not graduated at any of the learned Universities; he had been subject to no mental discipline; nor had he been trained in regular habits of study: All the knowledge of divinity he had attained had been acquired by his own independent exertions, or learned in the study of Mr. Stephens. Destitute of property, patronage, books, and without a single sermon or skeleton, this youthful evangelist was suddenly called to leave his secular avocations for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to his fellow-men.

Strange to say, this is the manner in which the Wesleyan ministry has been supplied for nearly a century. The numerous instances of men of remarkable gifts and talents raised from this uncultivated soil, are among the most astonishing moral phenomena on record. There have been, in every period of our history, men who, with no better preparation than that enjoyed by Mr. M'Nicoll, have passed into the highest ranks of intellect, learning, eloquence, and practical wisdom. For truth, pathos, depth of thought, knowledge of the human heart, profound theology, lofty and sublime views of religion, command of a chaste, or rich and flowing diction, powerful and awakening appeals to the conscience, and, in some cases, beauty and fascination of style, the Methodist ministry has presented, at different times, the finest specimens of pulpit-eloquence. Perhaps, in the case of the few who are capable of rising above all

difficulties, there may be an advantage in the absence of artificial rules, and in the unembarrassed play of native genius. This advantage, if it be one, has been possessed by the gifted men of our Connexion. Hence, not being formed on a common model, they have been excellent on a perfectly different scale; and, perhaps, no two among them, of any eminence, have had any (or, at least, very few) points of resemblance. That which constituted Cowper the poet of his day, and gave an indescribable charm to his verse, which all felt, whilst few understood, was not that he had studied the art from the most approved masters, but because he spoke the simple language of the heart, and adorned its sentiments and feelings in the beautiful drapery of nature. In like manner, deep feeling, an accurate knowledge of religion, and the supplies of illustrative material from books and observation, absorbed by powerful intellect and native strength, have, in innumerable cases, produced the most powerful orators, and, as Curran remarks, made the pulpit "a throne of light."

But these are exceptions to the rule, and not the rule itself. It is not every man who is called to the performance of great duties, without any suitable preparation, who is in possession of such gigantic powers of mind as independently to sustain him in the task. The few who have these resources to retire upon, raise themselves to eminence, in despite of the most sickening and discouraging difficulties. The history of our ministry, the state of our literature, the amount of good accomplished, and the consummate wisdom and ability with which the government of the Connexion has been conducted, unite to attest this fact. Whilst this system of religion has created, by the blessing of God, an infinite amount of moral feeling and sentiment, led millions to the knowledge of "Christ and him crucified," kindled the joys of salvation in a countless multitude of souls previously dead to every holy feeling, and raised those who have come under its influence, by many degrees, in the scale of intelligence, happiness, and respectability; it has, also, at the same time, found minds of the first order lost like the diamond in the common mass, and, affording them an opportunity of developing their majestic powers, has placed them amongst the highest characters of the human race. If evidence of this were demanded, it could be readily given:—It is amply furnished by the eloquence of Bradburn, by the multifarious learning of

Clarke, by the profound, scriptural, and beautiful writings of Watson, and the various and elegant attainments of M'Nicoll.

But although the most powerful minds have been enabled to surmount all difficulties arising out of the want of instruction and preparation, those of an inferior order have not been able so to emerge. Baffled, defeated, mortified, and broken-hearted, many pious and holy men have, no doubt, at different times been obliged to abandon the work, and have retired to mourn, in the midst of disappointed hopes and secular employments. Others, without being driven to this extreme, have remained in the exercise of a feeble ministry, mortified, and not unfrequently despised by a murmuring people. This inefficiency is not, or but to a slight degree, their own fault. To expect, because some men have attained great eminence, who were originally placed in similar circumstances, that, therefore, they ought to do the same, is to expect, that the sparrow shall keep pace with the eagle, mount as high in the air, and meet the glorious beams of the sun with an equally open vision.

This cannot be; and when provision is made to meet the wants of human nature, the ordinary standard and aggregate of mental power and capability must be the rule. It is most inconsistent to take the highest order of mind in any department of life, by which to judge of the wants of the mass. If, in a numerous family, parents were to adopt the principle, that, because one child manifested great precocity and aptitude in the acquisition of knowledge, they would educate their whole family on the scale of this child's capacity, it is certain that all the rest, if not absolute dunces, would be incapable members of society. The old routine of education and preparation for the great business of life must be pursued; and if, perchance, any one of the household should go beyond the common line, this can only be considered a solitary case. It is so with regard to the Christian ministry. The general grade of intellect, capacity, and natural fitness for the office must, in all times, lie between the highest and the lowest standards. No one would argue, that men who possess only the common qualifications of human nature are in no need of assistance for such a work as the ministry. Instant and rapid intuition is not the mode by which even the most favoured individuals of our race obtain ample knowledge. It is invariably acquired, either by the instructions of a living teacher, or by the slow process of reading. One of

the great disadvantages attending the old system has been, that of leaving young and inexperienced men to find out, by their own observation, even the proper books to be read, and also of discovering, in the winding labyrinths of universal knowledge, the right method of appropriation. In consequence of these difficulties, taking the whole number of cases, it is not going beyond the truth to affirm, that many years of valuable time have been lost; that an infinite amount of talent has been buried; that feebleness and inefficiency have cramped the ministerial exertions of many who might have been most efficient men; and that others, discouraged and confounded, have given up the hope of success in the cultivation of their minds, and the improvement of their ministry, and have sunk into a state of mental *inertia*.

The stale objection—that this view of the case is substituting human in the place of Divine and spiritual preparation—may be met by the remark, that the two classes of qualifications are perfectly distinct from each other; and that, to supply the candidate for the ministry with those aids which belong to human learning is by no means to trench on the work of the Holy Spirit. The moral fitness, the Divine call, the spiritual gifts, which are always implied in the ministerial office, are all from the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. So are all the principles, motives, and emotions of general piety; and yet no one denies that the instructions of man are necessary. No doubt, the elements of all piety and religion are laid in the mind at the period of conversion; yet it would be deemed, and rightly deemed, the rankest enthusiasm for such persons to consider themselves in so sublimated a state as to preclude the necessity of the teaching of the word of God, and of the ministry which He has appointed. The new nature which is communicated in regeneration includes the life, the power, the judgment, and the tastes essential to the habits of piety and the duties of religion; just as the common humanity of man implies the possession of all the faculties and senses, requisite to prepare him to enjoy the pleasures and perform the duties of life. But though, in the latter case, there exists the aptitude and the capacity for the attainment of a knowledge of the varied arts of life, yet it is found necessary that the rules and laws of the different departments of knowledge should be taught, in order to qualify for the practical discharge of the duties in question. These analogies will hold

good, in their main features, in regard to the ministry. The capacity for the office, in all its departments, is unquestionably given in the call of God and the anointing of his Holy Spirit. Nothing can supply the want of this; so that, although a person destitute of this *call* and this *anointing* may be taught all the elegancies of general scholarship, all the languages which were ever spoken on earth, all the lengths and breadths of universal science, and, in addition to all the rest, may attain to the most perfect and commanding oratory; yet, notwithstanding all this, he would have no right to take on him the office of the ministry, and would be totally disqualified for the efficient discharge of its functions. No power of man can supply, either in the attainment of personal religion, or in the fitness for the ministry, that which appropriately belongs to God.

But, then, does it follow from this, that, the foundation being laid in the work of God, nothing is left to human means? This question may be answered by another: "Does the Holy Spirit, with the call to the ministry, either in that or by another distinct operation, communicate, by direct inspiration, a knowledge of the theology of the Holy Scriptures?" The reply must be in the negative. No such inspiration is vouchsafed. For any thing which can be proved to the contrary, the election to the office of the ministry may be made, in consequence of some natural adaptation and fitness, in unison with the spirit of genuine religion. The peculiar endowments of mind, and capacity for public affairs, as well as facility in speaking, possessed by many men, evidently fit them much more than others for this office. If the great Head of the church call them to the ministry in consequence of these natural intellectual qualities, then it will be obvious that human aid is admissible. Indeed, no objection is ever made against the endeavour, by education, and the advantages of science and general knowledge, to expand, strengthen, elevate, and refine the natural faculties of the mind. Then it seems requisite, in the case under consideration, to do the same; for this plain reason,—that, although the knowledge, light, and grace which prepare for the duties of the ministry, flow from the influence of the Spirit of God; yet, as that knowledge must pass through the mind, and be expressed in the language, of the preacher, it must of necessity take its colouring and form from the state of his soul, and the nature of his attainments. The faculties are not quiescent and passive in their reception and

employment of that limited and ordinary assistance and inspiration granted to those who are employed in the work of the ministry. This does not ever appear to have been the case, except on very rare occasions, with the inspired prophets. The individuality as well as the diversified style of the sacred writers clearly show, that though the sentiments, facts, and revelations of these eminent servants of God were communicated by his direct suggestion, yet the mind of the individual prophet gave the particular form to the communication. The diligent student of the writings of St. Paul would, without any superscription to his epistles, from internal evidence alone, know that he was reading the productions of that eminent man. This can only be imagined as possible on the supposition, that though the inspiration was from God, and must of course suggest words agreeing with the inspired sentiment, yet the collocation of the words, constituting what is denominated "style," would be peculiar to the apostle himself.

Then, even in this case, we owe much of the peculiarity of St. Paul's writings to the qualities of his mind, as well as to the nature of his previous studies and attainments. If this be true respecting a directly-inspired apostle, how much more so respecting those who can lay no claim to such a degree of Divine influence? Experience and observation attest the fact, that, whether a knowledge of Divine truth is attained by a direct exertion of the Spirit on the faculties, or by the study of the Scriptures and theological writings in general, when it emanates from the minister in the form of instruction to others, it is crude or well-digested, confused or perspicuous, rambling or condensed, minified or sublime, just in proportion to the qualities of his mind, and of his previous culture and preparation for the sacred office.

The supposition, that the call of the apostles (being illiterate men) to the office of the ministry forms a reason against the instruction of persons, being themselves converted and called of God, has been most ably met by Bishop Horsley. He remarks:—"It pleased God to commit the first preaching of the Gospel to men whose former occupations and conditions may be supposed to have excluded them from the pursuits and attainments of learning, and from the advantages of education, 'that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of them.' But it is evident, that these gifts, with which he was pleased to adorn the two first offices in the Christian church, were to those first preachers instead of education: For the qualities of a pene-

trating judgment in abstruse questions, and a ready recollection of written knowledge, which the first preachers enjoyed by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, are, in kind, the very same which men to whom this supernatural assistance is denied, may, with God's blessing, acquire in a less degree by long and diligent study. These talents existed unquestionably in the minds of the first inspired preachers, in a degree in which by mere industry of study they cannot be attained. The apostles were by infinite degrees the best-informed of all philosophers; and the prophets of the primitive church were the soundest of all divines. But yet the light of inspiration, and the light of learning, however different in degree, (as the difference, indeed, is inexpressible,) are, nevertheless, the same in kind; for reason is reason, and knowledge is knowledge, in whatever manner they may be produced,—the degree of more and less being the only difference of which the things are capable. As the word of wisdom, therefore, and the word of knowledge, were to the first preachers instead of learning, so in these later ages, when the Spirit no longer imparts his extraordinary gifts, learning is instead of them.

"The importance and the necessity of it to a Christian preacher evidently appears from God's miraculous interposition, in the first ages, to infuse learning into the minds of those who, by want of education, were unlearned; for, if the attainments of learning were of no importance to the true and effectual preaching of the Gospel, to what purpose did that God who commanded light to spring out of darkness, by an exertion of the same almighty power, light up the lamp of knowledge in the minds of uneducated men? The reason of this extraordinary interposition in the early ages was, that, for the first promulgation of the Gospel no abilities to be acquired by education were sufficient for the teacher's office: And the reason that this extraordinary interposition hath long since ceased is, that Christianity, having once taken root in the world, those inferior abilities which may be attained by a diligent improvement of our natural talents, are now sufficient for its support. But in all ages, if the objections of infidels are to be confuted; if the scruples of believers themselves are to be satisfied; if Moses and the prophets are to be brought to bear witness to Jesus of Nazareth; if the calumnies of the blaspheming Jews are to be repelled, and their misrepresentations of their own books confuted; if we are to be 'ready,' that is, if we are to be qualified

and prepared, 'to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us;' a penetration in abstruse questions, a quickness in philosophical discussion, a critical knowledge of the ancient languages, a familiar acquaintance with the Jewish history and with all parts of the Sacred Writings, a sound judgment, a faithful memory, and a prompt elocution, are rare talents, without which, the work of an evangelist will be but ill performed. When they are not infused by inspiration, they must be acquired by diligence in study and fervency in prayer. And if any in the present age imagine, that, wanting the advantages, they may be qualified for preachers of the Gospel, they are to be considered as enthusiasts; unless, like the apostles, they can appeal to a confirmation of their word by 'signs and wonders following.' Inspiration is the only means by which they may be qualified for the business in which they presume to meddle; and of a real inspiration the power of miracles is the proper sign and inseparable concomitant."

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"They [the apostles] were, perhaps, not knowing in the details of natural philosophy; for, the arguments for the being and the providence of God, from the visible order and harmony of the universe, is the same, by whatever laws its motions may be carried on. They were not physicians or anatomists; because they had the power of curing diseases and healing wounds without medicines or art. But they were profound metaphysicians, the best of moralists, well-informed historians, accurate logicians, and excellent in that strain of eloquence which is calculated for the conveyance of instruction, the enforcement of duty, the dissuasion from vice, the conviction of error, and the defence of truth. And whoever pretends to teach without any of these qualifications, hath no countenance from the example of the apostles, who possessed them all in an eminent degree, not from education, but from a higher source."

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"To allege the apostles as instances of illiterate preachers, is of all fallacies the grossest. Originally, perhaps, they were men of little learning,—fishermen, tent-makers, excisemen: But when they began to preach, they no longer were illiterate, they were rendered learned in an instant, without previous study of their own, by miracle. The gifts which we find placed by an apostle himself at the head of their qualifications, were evidently

analogous to the advantages of education. Whatever their previous character had been, the apostles, when they became preachers, became learned: They were of all preachers the most learned. It is, therefore, by proficiency in learning, accompanied with an unreserved submission of the understanding to the revealed Word,—but it is by learning, not by the want or neglect of it,—that any modern teacher may attain to some distant resemblance of those inspired messengers of God."

This long digression originated in a feeling of regret, that a mind naturally so rich, and capable of the highest culture, as that of Mr. M'Nicoll, should have been left destitute of early theological and literary training. In some measure, he made up for the loss, by illustrating the principle of Bishop Horsley's reasoning. For, though he did not, in the beginning, possess the qualifications mentioned, yet he diligently sought them, and only by their attainment secured that rank and standing in the ministry which were universally accorded to him.

Brighter days now open on the Connexion. Means have been adopted for the theological education of part of the candidates for the ministry amongst us; and, no doubt, the advantages will be so obvious, in a short time, that provision will be required and provided for the entire number. Till then, the resources of Methodism, and the legitimate moral influence of its ministry, cannot be developed. With as large an amount of sense, reason, strength, imagination, and all the elementary qualities of mind, as usually fall to the lot of any class of men either in the church, or in civil life, these powers, to an amazing extent, have been paralyzed and rendered comparatively useless, through the want of early training. This evil must, in part, remain till sufficient room is provided, either in the present Institution, or by the establishment of similar ones, in sufficient number, for the reception of every youth who shall be admitted to the ministry.

The first two years of the itinerant life of Mr. M'Nicoll were spent in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Some circumstances connected with these appointments had a very decided connexion with his subsequent eminence. His friend, Mr. Stephens, was his superintendent, and remarks:—"Our society in Edinburgh was then small, but it was very select; and our congregations were good. Among our friends and communicants we numbered the Hon. Miss Napier, sister of the then Lord High Commis-

sioner; the Right Hon. Lady Helen Dalrymple; Lady Maxwell; and many others, who, though not titled, were highly respectable. The superintendent, his wife, and colleagues, and several other persons, had the happiness of meeting in band with Lady Maxwell, once a week, at her own house. We then had the honour to dine with her ladyship, in company with such other ministers and people of various denominations, and from different parts of the world, as her ladyship chose to invite from week to week. After dinner we spent an hour or two in religious conversation, led chiefly by her ladyship, whose deep piety, dignified manners, benignity of temper, and extraordinary conversational powers, I have never seen equalled from that day to this; nor do I expect it, till I meet her among the spirits of the just made perfect in heaven.

"Such connexions, while they tended greatly to the edification of all the parties, were also the means of promoting the usefulness of the preachers in the city and its vicinity; and though I would not undervalue the direct influence of Methodism in Scotland, either in present or former times, yet I cannot avoid thinking, that, at least, in olden times, its indirect influence was great and salutary. Such, too, I remember, was the opinion of one of the greatest and best of the Presbyterian clergymen of those days.

"The year Mr. M'Nicoll spent in Edinburgh had a decided influence on his future life and character, in another respect: God had given him a taste and capacity for searching out and intermeddling with all knowledge; and here his natural curiosity was admirably suited, excited, and gratified. An ancient and royal city, the capital of the kingdom, abounding in historical records, and natural and artificial wonders, in colleges and schools, in learning and learned men, in pious and benevolent institutions, and the most talented and celebrated ministers of the age, could not fail to rouse and draw forth all his dormant but gigantic powers. He assiduously ransacked all accessible sources of information, and vastly enlarged the stock of his previous knowledge; and, at the same time, stretched far wider his capacity for future accumulations. He received, also, in that happy year, a deeper baptism of the Holy Ghost, and his ministry was attended by a Divine unction."

In the next year, which was spent in Glasgow, Mr. Stephens informs us, "He was valued by his superintendent, beloved by

the people, and useful in winning souls to Christ. Here, too, he had great opportunities for intellectual improvement, which he diligently cultivated, while he made it his main business to 'grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'"

The writer of these pages has been informed by another friend, the Rev. William Atherton, who knew Mr. M'Nicoll at this period, that he had then taken JAY as his model both in composition and preaching. Few things could be more dissimilar than were afterwards the sermons of these two eminent men. Had Mr. M'Nicoll continued to cultivate the sententious style of Jay, he would have been less profound, but much more popular. With his powers of description and command of imagery, he might have succeeded, no doubt, as a captivating declaimer; and how he came to adopt a different manner, does not appear. His natural taste corresponded with the style which he finally adopted; and yet it might have been so chastened and trained as to have enabled him to succeed in the one which his juvenile fancy led him to admire.

As every person possesses an individuality of mind peculiarly his own, the more excellent way is, to cultivate his own powers to the highest point of perfection, rather than graft on his native stock the exotic excellences of other men. If one admired model of public speaking were universally followed, besides the awkward stiffness which must necessarily be induced by the habit of imitation, it would have the effect of defeating the benevolent purpose of God in bestowing a "diversity of gifts." The great world of mind is variously constituted, so that one type and form of truth cannot possibly suit every mental capacity. One of the primary laws of nature, as well as one of the merciful provisions of religion, is, to create such a variety as shall be adapted to each. This, we find, is one of the excellences of the primitive preachers, as well as of the Bible itself. How great the contrast betwixt St. Paul and St. John! How profound, elaborate, and sublime the reasoning and eloquence of the former! how sweet, simple, and pathetic the latter! while the intermediate space between the depth and grandeur of the one, and the simplicity of the other, is filled up with every hue and form which truth can assume. The Divine Being, in the fulness of his love, has not only provided for the universal salvation and happiness of his great family, but even in the *media* of its

manifestation we find the principle of a benevolent adaptation. The mental constitution of men will guide their judgment and feelings, as to the style of address which they prefer. Hence it is impossible for the same public speaker to be equally acceptable to all his hearers.

But although it may be proper for every man to retain his own identity, and not to ape another, yet when great strength and originality of powers are given, it does not follow, that a useful and rich variety cannot be attained by the same person. This, however, can only be secured by the cultivation of all the faculties equally, and by holding them in perfect balance. If, where the metaphysical taste exists, the owner of this faculty abandons himself altogether to speculations, studies, and discourses, agreeing with his prevailing passion, the consequence must be, that all his other powers will gradually be weakened, till in the end they will be absorbed in one, and he will only be capable of thinking and speaking as a mere metaphysician. In like manner, if the reasoning faculty be given in such measure as to make it a pleasure to study the principles, the evidences, and the tendencies of things; and this pleasure be indulged, in reading, disputation, and splitting hairs, to the entire exclusion of those tastes which belong to man, as a sentient being; then the effect will be to wear him down to a lean, dry piece of logic. On the other hand, when the imagination, fancy, and passions are cherished and indulged to the neglect of the mental powers, then the mind must become like one of those sea-birds which, because made for long and tedious flight, are nearly all wing and no body. Beauty, as well as strength, consists of a perfect symmetry of parts; and, as habits of speech must flow from habits of thought, the first thing which ought to be regarded is, the healthy cultivation of all the powers of the mind.

Next to the right management of the mind itself, the subjects of study and reading must have an important connexion with an established style of preaching. Variety is the desire of most young ministers of taste and genius; and yet how few ever acquire it in the proper sense of the term! If they succeed in treating on different topics, it is usually in a uniform manner; so that the charm of diversity is lost in the mannerism of the speaker. If he take as his text an Old-Testament narrative, or one of our Lord's inimitably-simple and touching parables, or

some doctrinal thesis, each is reduced to the same primary element in passing through his own mind; so that whatever may be the subject of discourse, it is argumentative, dogmatical, or declamatory, just as these habits may happen to have been cultivated by the speaker. Now, the power of varying and adapting discourse to the spirit of the sacred writers, and to the real wants of mankind, consists in the ability to treat each subject in its own spirit; the narrative according to the rules of touching and edifying story; the parable, on the principles of parabolical teaching; and the doctrinal thesis, in a clear, lucid, forcible, and convincing argumentation.

The studies of those who succeed in this must not lie in one direction only, and must not be limited to one era. The writers of the age of non-conformity traversed the entire field of religious truth. It is only necessary to take up the works of Jackson, Owen, Howe, Baxter, and others, and examine the table of contents, to perceive that they propose to sound the mighty depths of theology. It has been extensively reported, in the religious world, that a gentleman of great acuteness and eloquence, in one of his ebullitions of wit and sarcasm, remarked concerning one of these writers, that his works were like "a continent of mud." That they are not so clear and lucid as many productions of more modern writers, may be allowed, and for this plain reason,—because they are infinitely deeper. These writers treat very much on the science and principles of things, whilst the moderns content themselves with verbal proof and illustration. They tell us what the words mean which teach a specific doctrine; the ancients were more anxious to make us acquainted with the amplitude of meaning which is embodied in the doctrine itself: The moderns excel the ancients in biblical criticism, and in this respect are to be admired; but the divines of the olden times much excel them in teaching and illustrating the general science of theology and its particular relations. With them, divinity was a great and mighty scheme, embracing the nature of the Deity, his attributes, his decrees, his platform of government, his great redemption, his method of saving man, his kingdom as established on earth, and all the events of the grand prophetic outline. They entered into all the sublimities of these profound and glorious subjects, and made them the themes of their ordinary ministrations.

The race of popularity now lies between dogmatism and

declamation. At a first view it seems strange, that an age which prides itself on its intellectual advancement, mental strength and elevation, freedom from old prejudices, the general ascendancy of reason, and on its pre-eminent love of letters, should, notwithstanding, crowd to the places where a bold dogmatism prevails. Yet, such are the eccentricities of human nature, that, at a period when it professes a peculiar love for freedom of thought, it gives its suffrages to a kind of teaching which discards all discussion, and only deals in assumption. Some of the most popular men of the age are, and have been, almost unbounded in their presumption in this respect. Wild and extravagant interpretations of Christian doctrine, fanatical notions of spiritual gifts and influence, heretical and unauthorized sentiments respecting the person and kingdom of Messiah, bold and fanciful illustrations of the prophetic Scriptures, have been supported by the most ranting positivity ever witnessed in Christianity; and yet this has been one of its most popular marts. Rank, fashion, and learning, as well as the commonalty, have pressed in crowds to listen to men who have anathematized them, at the same time, as unchristian, if they refused to admit their dogmas as the truth. Man is fond of novelties; and although, in exhibiting them, the teacher may trench on the pride and dignity of reason, yet it is found that the love of the former causes him to succumb in his claim to the exercise of the latter. It is, however, most humiliating to see crowds of rational and accountable beings dragged at the car of some adventurer in theory, whose highest qualification is effrontery sufficient to discard the wisdom of past ages, the plain dictates of common sense, the authority of the sacred word, simply understood, and to set himself up for "some great one," to whom is confided a new dispensation of the Gospel.

Declamation aspires to be the rival of dogmatism, and is perhaps more in favour with the public. The most celebrated and popular preachers of the age are those who have cultivated this style. In one respect this, too, is dogmatical, inasmuch as it assumes its premises. It is obvious, indeed, that, by the merciful arrangement of the Deity, the majority of things need no proof. They exist, are arranged, stand out in bold relief, work their beneficent results, are objects of sense, and almost palpable to the most unobservant of mankind. The constitution of the human mind, taken in harmony with the objects around

us, clearly shows, that the Great Author of nature intended the aggregate blessings and privileges of life to be gratefully enjoyed on this admitted and constantly-experienced adaptation, and exhaustless resources of the economy of nature. In like manner, when the first principles of Christian truth have been well examined and clearly ascertained, it would be an abuse of reason to be constantly examining and laying the foundation. Reason has its limits, as well as its uses; and when it enters the domains of faith, it passes its legitimate boundary. It belongs to reason to ascertain the evidences of Divine revelation, and also to assist in its true interpretation; but it is the province of faith, when this is once secured, to expatiate freely and delightfully in the ample field.

Whilst the mere declaimer cannot be considered a perfect preacher, he is often a very useful one. Man is much more a sentient than a reasoning being; and appeals made to his feelings are much more likely to affect him than truth logically addressed to his understanding. But these appeals cannot meet the whole of his case, ignorant and sinful as he is. He is required to believe, to attain to a state of holiness, and to obey God, in order to a final state of salvation. All this implies knowledge of the highest description; and no man ought to be addressed through his feelings, or to have his mind excited, except in conjunction with instruction respecting the great objects of faith, privilege, and duty.

The style ultimately adopted by Mr. M'Nicoll, though it seems he commenced in imitating Mr. Jay, was highly intellectual, and often metaphysical. This is probably to be accounted for by his residence in the family of the late eminent and venerable Dr. Adam Clarke, who is known, amongst his other high attainments, to have cultivated the Aristotelian science in great perfection. This event took place in the year 1806, and may be considered as one of those eras in the life of Mr. M'Nicoll which gave the final bias to his character and pursuits. When he left his native country, he travelled one year in Easingwold; at the end of which, going to Leeds to be received into full connexion with his brethren, he gained—what to him was of infinite value at that period—the friendship of that distinguished man.

Mr. Stephens informs us, respecting the year Mr. M'Nicoll spent in Yorkshire, and his connexion with Dr. Clarke, that, from various sources of information, he had "the satisfaction to believe

that he sustained his former reputation, made considerable additions to his mental furniture, drank deeper into the spirit of piety, and, by further experience and practice, became a more ready, eloquent, and powerful preacher. This I infer, partly from the far-famed, and still (by some) remembered sermon, which he preached at the next Conference in Leeds. The late Dr. Clarke in particular was so delighted with that sermon, that, at his earnest solicitation, the Conference appointed Mr. M'Nicoll to go with him to London. This appointment became a most important era in the public life of my dear young friend. For a soul like his to have a local habitation in the great metropolis of the British empire, and in some sense of the world;—to reside under the paternal roof of such a man;—to have daily access to his library and museum;—to sit constantly under the copious outpourings of this great and good man's large and well-stored mind, in the unshackled freedom of the domestic circle;—to be an object of his unbounded confidence and esteem;—and to share in the overflowings of his warm and generous heart:—These were signal advantages, of which he knew the value, of which he made due improvement, by which he was elevated among the bright luminaries of our Connexion, and for which, I doubt not, he will not cease to praise God to all eternity."

Men of great originality often appear idle, when, in truth, their minds are incessantly at work. There was unquestionably in Mr. M'Nicoll no great fondness for the mechanical part even of learning itself; and yet, visit him at any period, and in circumstances in which he would be taken as the very personification of careless indolence, it would not be difficult to discover that his attention was absorbed, and his mind engaged, in the ardent pursuit of some great and interesting theme. To a person of Dr. Clarke's wonderful perseverance and industry, Mr. M'Nicoll would seem to be very defective in application; and, no doubt, it was in him, as in most men, a great fault.

Hence, in a letter obligingly sent by Mrs. Rowley, that lady remarks:—"My general impression now is, that he was an intelligent and interesting companion, and a most amiable man. But I do remember, that one of my father's negative commendations, in a good-natured way, was,—'Davy, why do not you work more? If you would but study, you would be a clever fellow.' But it is a fact, that in his earlier years he was exceedingly averse from mental exertion, except when necessity drove him to it:

And with great versatility of talent, and a remarkable aptness at seizing upon an idea, or an incident, and making the one his own, and working out the other at his pleasure, he was one who greatly preferred the social hour to the studious one, and who gained much of his mental possessions with a singular and almost instinctive facility. For, it is my belief, that his varied acquirements cost him very little effort. No man, indeed, could be in my father's society, admitted to all the unrestrained confidence of his mind, without being the wiser and the better for it. And it is well known to me, that Mr. M'Nicoll was on terms of the strictest friendship at our house. My father considered him a man of considerable mental powers, and of an exceedingly sweet and amiable disposition. He enjoyed his society greatly; and, most certainly, his uniform kindness of heart, and almost child-like simplicity of manners, made him a universal favourite in our family. His parting from us, at the expiration of his sojourn in London, will ever live in my memory. It was as if the purest and strongest bonds of friendship were about to be severed for ever: And, the feeling might almost be deemed to have been prophetic;—for we scarcely ever met again."

The hearty affection and anxious desire of Dr. Clarke to promote the interests of Mr. M'Nicoll by every possible means, are indicated, very fully, in the few remaining letters which have been preserved, and which were addressed to him after he left his happy and interesting abode. From the subjoined we may infer, that Mr. M'Nicoll had entered on his defence on some point of annoyance to which the Doctor had been exposed from some quarter of which we are now ignorant, and long since, no doubt, forgotten by all parties.

"*Surrey Institution,*
"*Blackfriars Bridge, Sept. 27th,* 1803.

"DEAR DAVY,

"YOU will perceive from a letter that you have lately received from a certain person, and of which I only heard last night, that my way is not likely to be more comfortable than I apprehended. But I assure you, I feel little, very little, on the account: My heart is, in some measure, callous on this subject. I intend to take very little notice of the business, and to go on my way. He sent me a copy of your answer to his letter, which both Mary and I thought a very proper one, and were astonished to find that a great man like him should employ his time about

such trifles. But into how many littlenesses must we run while we are determined to maintain our claim to infallibility!

"Have you the 'Life of Bunyan' ready? They will need it in a fortnight at the utmost. Do it speedily, and do it in a Johnsonian manner. I will take care that you shall get twopence halfpenny for it,* if you do it well. Now, do not disappoint them: If you do, all the blame will fall on me.

"I have scarcely got one half of my books unpacked yet; and, indeed, I have not room to lay them by. I have been buying books for the Institution, and getting my family a little settled. I long much to see you; and if I could get any body to go with me, I should certainly pay you a visit soon. I hope you have got through all the crooks in your lot before this time. Dinna tyne haist, mon; else aw's gane.

"Study yourself half to death, and pray yourself wholly to life. Do something that you can look at, something that will be worth having when you are not worth a rush. You have tenfold better abilities than I ever had; and greater advantages, for the time, from reading. I declare, I think, if I had your abilities, I would dig, water, manure, lop off, tie up, lead along, &c. till my garden should blossom and bloom like the rose, and my whole ground be like Carmel.

"Mary joins me in heartiest love, as do all the lads and Anna. You must run up some day and see us.

"Yours, my dear Davy,

"Very affectionately,

"A. CLARKE."

In another letter, dated "London, Nov. 15th, 1808," we find the same unabated ardour of affection. By the allusion in the first paragraph, it seems some one had been reflecting on the Doctor on account of his devotedness to learning.

"My dear Davy,

"I think Mr. —— simply means, by 'ploughing with the heifer,' &c. that he has tried human learning, and found it inadequate to the successful preaching of the Gospel. If he has any other meaning, what is that to me?

* Dr. Clarke had engaged him to write a short "Life of Bunyan" about this time for one of the booksellers, for which he used to say, humorously, he obtained five pounds.

"See that you be very temperate in all your acts and words.

"I have just received a proof of your 'Life of Bunyan,' to which I have affixed the following subscription: 'PORTSMOUTH, *Nov.* DAVID M'NICOLL.' After this I have added a Postscript, saying, that you 'have done the work, in the main, much to my satisfaction, and, I hope, to the satisfaction of every intelligent reader.'

"Mr. Cundee is well pleased with it, and earnestly wishes you to write a few notes on the 'Progress,' which he may print in a sheet or two at the conclusion. I said I would advise you to it, which I hereby do. You must do this speedily, and then I shall announce your name on the title-page; and, go to, you will be then dubbed an author.

"We have most dignified and elevated lectures at the Surrey, three times a week. O that you were here to witness true oratory, even in the details of chemical science!"

In two other short letters, the one dated "June 6th, 1809," and the other "Sept. 14th, 1810," the Doctor takes occasion to urge his young friend to decision in religion and diligence in study. In the former he says, "Give yourself to prayer and study: 'In works of labour and of skill,' &c.—you know the rest." In the latter, he repeats the advice: "Now, give yourself wholly to God and to his work, and you shall see better days than ever."

These extracts are given, not only on account of their own intrinsic value, but to show on what terms Mr. M'Nicoll had lived in the family of Dr. Clarke, and the benefits which he must have derived from his friendship. Whilst they represent Mr. M'Nicoll as a young minister, who was considered worthy of Dr. Clarke's high regard and tender affection, they, with equal clearness, exhibit the character of his learned patron, in a most amiable point of view. At the period in question, Dr. Clarke was in the zenith of his own popularity; engaged in the Record Commission; holding intercourse with nobility and the most celebrated men of the age; employed in superintending the Surrey Institution; and assisting the British and Foreign Bible Society in its most difficult translations: And yet he could find both heart and leisure to enter into the concerns of a young but promising preacher, for the purpose of guiding him in the path of wisdom and piety. We

have not only the characteristic warmth and affection of his benevolent heart, but a tender anxiety for Mr. M'Nicoll's spiritual growth, as well as for his ministerial and literary improvement. With the kindness of a generous friend, we find him prompting his pupil to study, labour, work, to do something that he might look upon with pleasure, by the alternate consideration of duty and the expression of confidence in his powers.

It would be edifying to know on what line of studies Dr. Clarke put Mr. M'Nicoll, during his residence with him; but respecting this we have no information: The probability, however, is, that he now, either from direct instruction, or by the example constantly before him, obtained that taste for general knowledge and science which marked his subsequent conduct through life. Indeed, it may be questioned whether his plan of study and reading did not become too diffuse, amplified, and desultory. To succeed well in many things, not only supposes fine talents, but constant and gigantic labours.

With a determination to make the entire encyclopedia of science and knowledge the matter of his study, his noble-minded patron possessed an untiring energy, and an industry as regular and habitual as the flow of time. Those who wish to imitate him in the multitudinous objects of his attention and pursuits, ought to bring equal powers and industry to the task; or the attempt will not only be futile in itself, but must waste in useless generalities those faculties which, were they but concentrated on some limited objects of study, would lead to a much more useful result. Agreeing with him in taste and mental character, there can be no doubt that the example of Dr. Clarke had the effect of causing Mr. M'Nicoll to "seek out and intermeddle with all knowledge." Had he prosecuted it with an ardour equal to that of his generous friend, it is impossible to say, with his fine and varied powers, what might have now been the remains of his sanctified genius.

Through the "Journal" of Mr. Benson, we are, in some measure, introduced to a knowledge of the qualities of Mr. M'Nicoll's preaching at that time. Under date of "August 19th," we find the following entry:—"In the morning, I read prayers at Queen-Street, and afterwards heard Mr. M'Nicoll, one of the young preachers appointed for this Circuit. I was, indeed, much pleased with his discourse, and quite surprised that he could preach so well." Praise from such a judge is

valuable. A man who himself had attained not merely to a distinguished popularity, but was unquestionably one of the greatest theologians, as well as argumentative, powerful, searching, and, in the true sense of the term, most eloquent preachers of his age, must be considered a competent judge of the qualifications of others. Indeed, from this period Mr. M'Nicoll took his rank amongst the most hopeful class of young men in the Connexion, and gradually attained, in reality, that eminence which hope then shadowed forth.

The marriage of ministers must be an event of great consequence to their comfort, character, and usefulness. After travelling in Portsmouth, Sheffield, and Nottingham, on receiving an appointment to the Birmingham Circuit, Mr. M'Nicoll entered into the matrimonial state with Miss Phelps, now his afflicted widow. This was, in all respects, a suitable engagement; and to Mr. M'Nicoll was, no doubt, the chief secondary cause of the peace and happiness which marked his tranquil path. Having no remarkable propensity to care for the things of this world, it became the more needful that he should have some one to care for him; and Divine Providence favoured him with one in whose judgment, affection, and fidelity he could confide with implicit confidence. It is well known to his friends, that, through life, his wife had, vicariously, to bear all his temporal cares. But while he exacted this, he withheld nothing of his income from her, except when he contemplated the purchase of some choice old book. He then abstracted, as he could, a sum equal to the purchase, and was often known to leave his bargain at some friend's house till he could secretly deposit it in his library. How he viewed his marriage, after a lapse of many years, we have the means of judging, by a letter written at Birmingham, with a post-mark, dated "April 14th, 1833." He says to Mrs. M'Nicoll,—"Yesterday I visited a number of old friends, in Birmingham, and found my heart, I trust, profitably affected. What important changes happen in a few years! Mr. —— is breaking fast. I conversed and prayed with him, and he wept at parting in a very affectionate manner. He talked much about you, and about old times. We shall, most probably, see him no more in this world. I sat an hour with Ann Room and her family. They are all still very helpless, but yet, as far as possible, industrious. How quickly has time passed since our marriage-dinner there! May God Almighty speedily prepare us

all to sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb! I looked round on those streets, and thought of our wedding, of David in his infancy, and of many things which took place in those days."

From this period, the public life of Mr. M'Nicoll was as uniform and as happy as usually falls to the lot of men in his situation. The Wesleyan itinerancy is perfectly unique; and the movements of a preacher through the Connexion, from the commencement to the close of his career, is often very varied. There is, of course, in this, as in all other systems, the high and the low, the good and the evil, the place of honour and that of the common lot. These distinctions exist, not merely from the different talents and attainments, but also from the conventional arrangements of the Connexion. Hence men who have an equal standing in the Society, do not always obtain it because there is any similarity in their talents and character. In a great Connexion, as various offices must be held and functions discharged, it follows, that those who perform their duties best will gain the confidence of their brethren, and be, in their own line, at the head of their class. Pastoral superintendence is a very different matter from mere preaching; and many men, who have but a common share of talent for public speaking, are possessed of the highest qualities for government. On this account, it often happens, that men of perfectly dissimilar talents and qualities are equally useful, esteemed, and honoured.

It would be going too far to affirm, that the governing talent was not possessed by Mr. M'Nicoll in any eminent degree; for, persons of his quantum of mind have it in their power to employ their faculties in more directions than one; yet he certainly had but little taste for this department of the ministerial office. Hence, in acquiring his rank and influence, he was not indebted to his knowledge of connexional polity, or any great tact and skill in the management of the complicated affairs of the Body to which he belonged. With a large amount of general knowledge, and principles as sound as conviction of truth could make them, he shrunk from the details of business, and sought usefulness in another direction.

The peculiar structure of the Wesleyan Connexion has also had the effect of preparing a vastly-diversified field of labour for its ministers. Hence, if the terms "good," "excellent," "great," "popular," and even "useful," are taken to define the same or perfectly similar qualities, a complete mistake will be entertained.

It may be affirmed, respecting different men at a distance, that they possess some of these excellences; and a bundle of petitions from various Circuits may be sent annually to Conference for their services. Now, on a fixed standard of taste, (as in some of the Dissenting bodies,) it might be imagined that these much-desired men were somewhat like each other; but, to suppose this, would be to blunder most egregiously. One preacher is well received because of the solidity of his judgment, the profundity of his mind, the accuracy of his knowledge, the extent of his theological attainments, the beauty and chaste simplicity of his style, and the power of his appeals to the heart and conscience. Another is in great request, because, in addition to the granite which forms the basis of his discourses, like the tasteful sculptor, he can chisel graceful, beautiful, and gorgeous figures on its exterior, to attract the senses, as well as to gratify the intellect. But as the great mass of mankind, whether religious or irreligious, have seldom much relish for intellectual employments, and have much more pleasure in giving themselves up to impulse than in using their understandings; the most popular preachers are always those who exhibit the most vehemence.

With dispositions so different in the great body of the people, it is not to be expected that the same man can be equally acceptable and useful in every place. This, in truth, constitutes one of the greatest difficulties of the itinerant life. The preaching of some men, indeed, is so general, and yet, on the whole, so excellent, that it seems to suit every place, and every class of persons. Those, however, who have not this general faculty, but, on the other hand, study specific topics, and endeavour to adapt their ministry to particular places, classes, and occasions, find that, on every removal, they have to shift their ground, and apply themselves to a new line of study and address.

This was very much the case with Mr. M'Nicoll. From the time of his leaving the abode of Dr. Clarke, and till the conclusion of his labours, by general and universal consent he was considered eligible for the highest ministerial stations in the Connexion; and yet, his popularity in some places was rather homage paid to superior mind, attainments, and character, than that which follows its idol in greeting and admiring multitudes. The applause of universal acceptance was accorded to Mr. M'Nicoll; no one detracted from his claims; every one

was loud in his praise; and, when circumstances harmonized with his peculiar qualifications, he enjoyed all that is indicated in this representation. In many of the places where he has sojourned, crowds of delighted hearers have hung on his lips, whilst he has poured forth the abundance of an enriched and sanctified mind.

These external circumstances had much influence on Mr. M'Nicoll, both in his preparations for public service, and in the delivery of his discourses. He was not impelled to much careful study, unless he had the prospect of an audience intent on profiting by his exertions. This is, no doubt, a questionable rule; and those preachers are most likely to succeed in all the objects of their ministry, who make it their business invariably to prepare in the best possible manner for their work, irrespective of any adventitious circumstances from without. A ministry ought to be creative: It ought to impart to those around it, such a measure of light, power, and influence, as to attract, and to change the most sterile and barren places into the garden of the Lord. This, however, can never be done, if it is brought down to the level of the people and the place. An adaptation of topics and of style is, no doubt, proper; but if congregations are small and cold, the most certain way in the world to keep them so, is to preach to them a flimsy theology in a lifeless and uninviting manner.

The great end of the ministry is usefulness; and the author of these brief Memoirs has the means of knowing that Mr. M'Nicoll was made, at different times, extensively useful, not only in the general character of his ministry, but, likewise, in the conversion of sinners to God. Information on this subject has come to hand in rather an unexpected manner. It arises out of a correspondence with Dr. Claudius Buchanan. It seems that Mr. M'Nicoll had written to that good and eminent man for permission to make extracts from his writings for some literary project in which he was then engaged, and had informed him of a gracious revival of religion in Birmingham. The reply is as follows:—

"*Kirby Hall, Borobridge, June 15th*, 1813.

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"Mr. Hunt has just delivered to me your letter. Be pleased to accept my thanks for your cordial and affectionate expressions of regard in the common Gospel. I am, indeed,

much gratified to hear that you have had so large an addition to the church this year. It would be well always to specify the numbers of those who are children of members, and of those who are strangers. Of your three hundred, I presume, the majority are strangers.

"I am happy to hear that you are making progress in your intended literary work. You are very welcome to make any use of my volumes that you think may contribute to the advancement of the Gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord.

"I am, dear Sir, very sincerely yours,

"C. BUCHANAN.

"P.S. Your extracts from my books may be at what length you please—the whole if you like."

How full of kind feeling and benevolence is this communication! How cheering to see a gentleman of Dr. Buchanan's exalted character and rank in the church, thus corresponding with a young Methodist preacher! And, we may add, how much would religion be advanced, were all its ministers to cultivate and exhibit this truly catholic spirit! We are now ignorant of the kind of literary project which Mr. M'Nicoll had then in his mind; but it is too evident, that, like many other contemplated productions, it came to nothing.

It may be inferred from this letter, that Dr. Buchanan had, by some means, made himself acquainted with the internal working of the Wesleyan system; and it afforded him an evident gratification to be informed of a large addition of members to the Societies. But the point most to be remarked is, the expectation expressed that the great majority of the new converts were "strangers," whilst few of the "children of members" were found amongst them. This, it is known, has always been the case, not only in any remarkable revivals, but also in the more steady progress of the work. Other communities of Christians, no doubt, have to make the same complaint; but in our Connexion, this has long been a subject of most serious regret. The children of members constitute a very small fraction of those who join the Societies.

The success of the Wesleyan ministry has always been amongst the out-door population. It has won its chief triumphs amongst the profligate and ungodly masses of the community. This is so far an advantage, and is answering one of the great

ends of religious means and institutions. But it is a matter deeply to be deplored, that so large a number of the offspring of pious parents should leave the fold of their fathers, when it is well known, that the vast majority of the alienated live in a state of irreligion.

The strict and godly discipline maintained may naturally account for the separation of the unconverted youth from the Societies ; but it will not account for so large a number remaining in that state. Without any curious speculations on the question, or at all discarding the doctrine of original sin, it must be true that the great majority of these children ought to be in such a frame of mind as to fit them for union with the visible church, and not only so, but to enjoy the saving power of the Gospel.

The practice has been, almost invariably, to lay all the blame of this state of things on parents themselves ; but it is a question, whether a great part of it does not justly lie against a defective economy. No modern church has made any express and suitable provision for the spiritual wants of the children placed, by holy baptism, within its pale. It initiates them, by that sacred rite, into its visible communion, and then, by a strange neglect, leaves them to the influence of incipient depravity, the temptations of the world, or the incapacity or inattention of their parents, without any provision for their Christian instruction, or direct efforts for their conversion. All its ordinances, services, and even teaching are framed on the scale of capacity possessed by the adult mind, and addressed directly to the understanding and consciences of persons of mature age.

In this state of things, can it be a matter of surprise if the church lose her children ? Their conversion, humanly speaking, is an accident, more than the conversion of the masses of ungodly people who attend our places of worship ; for whilst ministers direct all their discourse and appeals to them, the children of our people have nothing provided at all suited to their wants. No wonder, then, if, through want of talent, time, or inattention, parents fail in doing their duty, that children abandon a church which neither recognises them, nor takes any pains to bring them to the knowledge of the truth.

Baptism constitutes every child a *bonâ fide* member of the fold of Christ, or it does nothing for him. And the same obli-

gation rests on the church to provide suitable and edifying means, whatever they may be, to promote the salvation of its infant charge as its adult. What would be thought of the consistency of our Connexion, if, by zealous preaching, united and believing prayer, the distribution of tracts, and various other agencies, with the blessing of God upon them all, a gracious revival of religion took place, in any particular locality, and then the new converts, after an introduction into the privileges of Christian communion, were to be left without further notice, and no kind of provision made for their improvement in the Divine life?

This is unquestionably the case with the children of our members. They are admitted by baptism, and then left altogether to themselves. This is not the place to enter into these discussions; but the single case adduced may go, in part, to account for the fact adverted to by Dr. Buchanan, and often and deeply deplored by all lovers of religion. These children ought to be recognised as a part of the church, the moment they are baptized; a system of instruction ought to be provided for them, in all the truths of religion, suited to their tender age and capacity; their morals should be watched and guarded with assiduous attention; their obligations to personal repentance and faith ought to be urged upon them as soon as they are able to understand their nature; their true conversion to God should be sought, and any dawnings of good nurtured and encouraged. Till this course be pursued, no church has a right to complain in disappointed grief, as those who expect to reap where they have not sown.

It is now impossible to trace the amount of usefulness with which the great Lord of the harvest favoured the labours of Mr. M'Nicoll, in the different Circuits in which he was stationed. This is another of the peculiarities of our itinerancy. The Wesleyan minister must be content almost to lose his identity. He is only one of many, and nothing in himself. His labours, together with all their fruit, go to the general stock, and are lost in the aggregate. It is easy to judge of the measure of success attending a stationed ministry. As there is only one pastor, the additions to the church, and the amount of moral influence prevailing around, will prove the extent of his usefulness. But not so with the Wesleyan minister: His labours are in conjunction with those of his colleagues; the influence and success of his ministry, in any particular place, are speedily ended by a removal; he is soon forgotten in the midst of the bustle and

excitement of new scenes and new claimants; any thing which God had enabled him to achieve, exists in no visible form, and can only be known from the individual testimony of those who have been brought to a knowledge of the truth by his labours. And as this is constantly going on, it is impossible to know to what extent his ministry has been blessed. No such moral scenes as those which surrounded Baxter at Kidderminster, Goodwin in Coleman-Street; and, in more modern times, Robinson at Leicester, Charles at Bala, and Fuller at Kettering, can ever grow up around a Wesleyan minister. He, above all men, is obliged to repose on his principles, to do good for its own sake, and to love the souls of men, because the Saviour has loved his own; for he never can behold a large number of affectionate, spiritual children, permanently surrounding him, to gladden him in his toils, and to encourage him in his pursuits.

In the present state of the Connexion, the public and extra labours of a minister can be more easily traced than his more private duties, unless recorded by himself. Mr. M'Nicoll has, for many years, been called to take his full share in this foreign department of the work. The first time the writer of these pages ever saw him was on one of those occasions, at his native village, when he travelled in Nottingham. Mr. M'Nicoll was then considered a highly-talented young man, and was extremely popular. His person, conversation, and vivacity are now vividly present to his recollection. His preaching was at that time eloquent and powerful, his conversational powers brilliant and entertaining, and his spirits exuberant beyond measure.

During Mr. M'Nicoll's residence in London, was formed one of those firm and close friendships of which a mind like his was so capable. When he arrived in the Hinde-Street Circuit, he found in the late John Jackson, Esq., R.A. a gentleman who was ever ready to enter into any plan that was proposed to him, of extending the efficiency of private benevolence, and who devoted his personal exertions, as well as the influence which he possessed in society, to promote all the grand objects of a genuine Christian philanthropy. A similarity of tastes and feelings, in appreciating both moral and natural beauty, soon produced an intercourse between them of a most intimate and confiding nature. Mr. M'Nicoll was peculiarly competent to judge, respecting that merit by which Mr. Jackson had attained to deserved eminence

in his profession, at the same time that he entertained the highest opinion of his piety and virtues. In Mr. Jackson's last illness, he earnestly requested that he might be favoured with as much as possible of his friend's society; and Mr. M'Nicoll, in compliance with this wish, was, for some days prior to his death, not a moment absent from the couch of the interesting sufferer. He frequently afterwards spoke of the beneficial influence exerted on his own mind by this assiduous attendance upon one whose dying testimony to the power of Divine grace, and whose tranquil and joyous departure out of this world, tended at once to soothe, to console, and instruct. A short time before his eyes were dimmed in death, Mr. Jackson exclaimed, "O Sir! you are an angel sent from heaven to comfort me!" After his decease Mr. M'Nicoll had the melancholy satisfaction of improving the occasion, by a funeral sermon; and endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to procure such materials as would have enabled him to place on record a more substantial tribute to the memory of his estimable friend.

His occasional excursions from home, in subsequent stages of his life, afforded him the opportunity of writing to his family, and constitute nearly our only stock of epistolary correspondence from his pen. The subjoined extracts will show in what spirit he prosecuted his labours, and how he viewed the world around him, as well as furnish specimens of his talent and feeling in that most enchanting department of writing.

In a letter addressed to Mrs. M'Nicoll, then in the country, dated "39, Sloane-Square, June 8th, 1827," he remarks:—"I have worked very hard lately, and am greatly fatigued; yet I feel stronger than when you went away. This evening I shall have preached nine times since Sunday morning last. I was last week at Fotheringay-Castle, where poor Mary Queen of Scots lost her life. I read the account of the execution on the very spot where it took place, and felt the most affecting interest in so doing. We also went through the seat of the marquis of Exeter, at Stamford, a most princely dwelling, and abounding in the most beautiful pictures. But 'there is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!'"

In letters addressed to his son David, in the spring of 1829, from Ireland, but chiefly without date, we meet with many characteristic passages full of beauty and feeling. We omit the details of sermons, speeches, meetings, and collections.

a hermit, and bivouacked in the valley below on cold beef and bread and wine, and made the region ring with the praises of the great Inhabitant, who filled the glorious temple, in the midst of which we worshipped. The ascent was long and difficult, but the descent was much more so, and more hazardous; for some parts were nearly perpendicular. It was rather an unpleasant task for the ladies; but, as John Bunyan says of *Much-Afraid*, 'They footed it well,' especially Mrs. Gillman with the help of her spectacles."

In another letter written a few days after the above, he says, —"On Tuesday, before I left Belfast, we had another grand Irish breakfast, given by a very sensible and pious lady, the widow of a major in the army. We then travelled on to Antrim, a little town, which gives name to the county. The houses and cottages are all beautifully white on the outside, but many of them pitifully poor within. We stopped some time at the preacher's house. It would have surprised you: The furniture was of the very lowest description. We turned aside on the right to see one of the Irish pillar towers. Dr. Clarke has described it, I think, in the third volume of his Life. He thinks they were built by the first Christians of the island, for the purpose of calling the people to public worship, as there are four windows at the top answering to the four quarters, and from which, as he conceives, horns were blown; for great brass horns have been found in the neighbourhood of these buildings. Returning from Antrim, we took a brief survey of Massarene castle, the seat of an Irish nobleman, whose name I forget. The grounds are laid out in the old-fashioned French style, with immense colonnades of trees, cut even with each other, like verdant walls, with walks and ponds between. Here the celebrated John Howe, the nonconformist, lived some time, as a member of the family, and wrote several of his admirable and pious works. We then visited Shane's Castle on the banks of Loch Reagh. The castle is in ruins, but the scenery is most beautiful. The lake is twenty-one miles by twelve. On Thursday I went to see the Giants' Causeway. The Causeway itself, consisting, it is said, of forty thousand pillars, all regularly formed by nature, is not so striking as the coast, which is, I think, the most magnificent that can well be conceived. The cliffs are grand in the extreme; some of them six hundred feet in height. We ascended one that seemed almost as per-

pendicular as a wall. I dared not look behind me. The journey was effected with considerable difficulty; but some of the company took hold of both my hands and lifted me along, else I know not how I could have proceeded. We sat down at the top, and partook of our provision; but such a prospect of land and water I had never seen! Looking over these fearful precipices had so affected my imagination, that in the night I could not sleep from the idea of their terrible depth irresistibly haunting me. The objects are as beautiful as they are sublime. The basaltic pillars are placed with great regularity, and look like the pipes of an organ.

"A few miles further on the same coast, stands the ruin of Dunlim-Castle, the oldest, perhaps, in Ireland, and formerly the seat of baronial splendour and warfare. It it built over the sea upon a dreadful crag. We crossed over a horrid chasm, with the sea rolling far beneath, by a bridge about eighteen inches wide without any wall on either hand. This also was a trial of courage. A lady running across some time ago fell in the middle, but took no harm: One of our company saw the occurrence. It was a most narrow escape. Her father was near, and said he lost his sight at the moment, while looking at the accident. The scene here again was awfully grand.

"This country is the scene of Dr. Clarke's early days; but we had not time to go to the field where his soul was set at liberty."

These extracts are given with the view of showing with what observation, pleasure, and taste Mr. M'Nicoll roamed amidst the works of God. One other may be added, on a different subject, as exhibiting the discrimination with which he remarked on books and men. It is a letter addressed to the Rev. Frederick Calder, after reading his excellent and interesting Life of Episcopius:—

"50, *Pembroke-Place, Liverpool, January 16th*, 1836.

"My dear Sir,

"I know not what judgment may be formed by the public of your excellent Life of Episcopius; but for myself, I must say, it appears to be an able and useful performance; and for the gratification and instruction I have derived from it, I beg you to accept my sincere and grateful thanks. The transactions it relates, and the characters it describes, are in them-

selves truly interesting and important; and they are rendered still more so by the clear and vivid light in which they are exhibited.

"I had no idea that the subject of your work was a man of such distinguished moral worth, and of such admirable capacity and accomplishments, having only known him in Brandt and others. You appear to have rescued him from this broken and, no doubt, prejudiced description of his character, by what I believe to be, in the main, a very fair picture of his numerous and various excellences. I always thought that the learned and eloquent controversialist who could, by one splendid speech at that celebrated synod, convert the ever-memorable John Hales from the fearful system of John Calvin, must be, beyond all question, an extraordinary man; but, I confess, I have always had, (obtained I know not how,) not, indeed, a *bad*, but a *low*, opinion of his religious character. Your readers will be glad to find that he has found at last a biographer who, in this respect, has done him ample justice.

"The case of Barneveldt is deeply affecting. Had Bilderdijk observed, that he had acted wrong, one would not have been surprised; but to say that he deserved his fate, is astonishing to me, after reading your account; unless it should appear that your authorities have grievously imposed upon you. You have done well to send for the pamphlets mentioned by Dr. Southey. They may furnish you with much fresh light upon the subject.

"Throughout the piece Episcopius stands out in honourable and triumphant contrast with his enemies. It is, perhaps, not fair to blame the Calvinian system for their conduct; but surely all impartial posterity must blame the men.

"On the whole, I think, the work does no small credit to your industry and talents. It is written in a good, clear, historic style; bold, but not at all affecting pompous and irrelevant embellishments. Every one must love the honest heartiness with which you attend to the subject rather than to the manner.

"When in after-times the humble literature of our Connexion may be considered by some ecclesiastical historian, your name will not be forgotten in the list of those who have delighted and adorned the church by such edifying though, unhappily, sometimes neglected labours. And, I assure you, my dear Sir, it gives me at this moment a glow of greater satisfaction than I can well express, to find that an old friend, and colleague of my

own, should, since I had the pleasure to travel with him many years ago, have so wisely improved his mind, and his opportunities for learning, as to be able to produce so excellent a work.

"You may expect, however, that very high Calvinists will treat you with severity, unless you should perchance escape with a few cold sarcastic smiles. If I were inclined to make any objections of a general-nature,—for an examination of particular parts is out of question in a brief letter,—I should say, the work is too copious, at least for the common reader. But the lover of church-history will, perhaps, think otherwise. It also discovers you to be an ultra-Arminian. Certainly, a man who is decided in his principles so far deserves respect; yet I never much approved of ultraism, either in politics or religion. As I advance in life, I find my interest in the Arminian controversy declines. There are very great difficulties on both sides. Fully to answer all objections, is a task for an archangel. One thing, you and I think, is certain,—that unconditional election and reprobation are equally unscriptural and irrational. Let us, with Mr. Fletcher, recommend our people to go to the grammar-school of faith and repentance, before they enter the university of election and reprobation. There is, after all, an immensity of good both in Calvinists and Calvinism.

"I thank you for a copy of Dr. Southey's letter: It is from the pen of a gentleman. I shall rejoice to hear of the success of your volume. My dear wife joins with me in best respects to you and Mrs. Calder and family.

"I am, dear Sir, yours affectionately,

"DAVID M'NICOLL."

Mr. M'Nicoll's schemes and projects in prose and poetry were innumerable. Few of them, however, were accomplished. Those which have been given to the world, whilst they please and edify, must occasion regret that he did not write more. He had been engaged for twenty years in collecting testimonies, from Christian writers of all times, on the witness of the Holy Spirit, as bearing evidence to the adoption of believers. His reading and research on this subject were prodigious. After his decease, a book was found with entries regularly numbered, and a corresponding number in, at least, a thousand volumes, in his library, noting extracts to be made for his intended work, in support of the view of that doctrine entertained by the religious Body to which he

belonged. From a syllabus of his design, drawn up by himself, it appears that his purpose was to prepare an original essay on the subject of spiritual influence, and, especially, the witness of the Spirit; then, to confirm the whole by testimonies from the most approved writings of all parties and of all ages; and, finally, to apply the whole to experimental and practical uses. In this design he had proceeded no further than the developement of his scheme, and the collection of materials to fill up the outline. With him the mental exercise of composition was much more easy and pleasing than the mechanical part. Scraps, sketches, outlines, skeletons, found in abundance in his scrutoire after he had left the world, indicate the fecundity of his mind in invention; whilst the unfinished state in which they are left shows, that his industry was not equal to his genius.

His "Argument for the Bible" is the largest, as well as the most profound and elaborate, of his publications. Amongst other testimonials of approval, two may be presented from persons of unquestionable ability. In a letter from the Rev. J. J. Blunt, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and himself a most able advocate for the truth of Scripture, by a species of proof somewhat similar to that of Mr. M'Nicoll, we have a most frank and honourable expression of approbation:—

"*St. John's College, Cambridge, Oct. 20th*, 1831.

"DEAR SIR,

"I FEAR you will have thought me guilty of discourtesy in not answering your letter to me sooner. I have been returned to College, however, only a few days; and it was not till my return that your packet came to my hands. I am much gratified by the handsome terms in which you speak of my publication on the Evidences, the more so as, from your own Essay on the same subject, (which I have delayed my answer a few days longer in order that I might read,) I perceive that you have turned your thoughts to a similar line of Argument. I quite agree with you in thinking, that the *fitness* of the doctrines of Scripture to one another, to the nature and the wants of man, (and one so apparently unpremeditated,) is a department of Evidence as complete as that of *undesigned co-incidences* in the facts of Scripture, though a less popular argument than the latter. It had occurred to me before, though I never saw it put so strongly: It is a very fertile subject, and might be expanded, I think, into

a very valuable body of Evidence. In perusing your little work, I only wished that you had developed your Argument a little more fully, and illustrated it by more numerous examples. But you have Butler with you, who often leaves it to his readers to follow up his hints, and seldom chooses to subject his reasoning to possible inconvenience or constraint, by illustrations. Short, however, as it is, it is full of excellent matter, and can scarcely fail of putting its readers into a very profitable train of thought. For myself, I can say, it belongs to a department of Evidence by far the most satisfactory of all; and, indeed, in my opinion, unanswerable.

"Pray accept my best thanks for your valuable Essay, as well as for your good opinion; and believe me, dear Sir,

"Yours very truly,
"J. J. BLUNT."

The second is from the Rev. S. T. Sturtevant:—

"Dear Sir,

"I have read your admirable work, which, most certainly, places you in a very high rank as an author. The view which you have taken of the subject is most just, though difficult; and yet this difficulty you have surmounted. The reasoning is abstruse; but the illustrations are easy, eloquent, and appropriate. I have long thought that true religion and sound philosophy were counter-parts of each other; but the danger is, lest we should love the philosophy of religion more than the religion itself. I have also long thought, that there is an impress of religion in all the works of nature; and that the earliest ages had little besides to direct them; and this is another of those analogies which you have so powerfully developed.

"Your frequent pulpit-exercises render it impossible for you to become an extensive writer; yet it is a great pity your talents should not fall upon some of our most difficult subjects. You are at that time of life which is best fitted for such a purpose. The crudities of inexperience are, with you, fully past, and the weakness of age does not hang upon you. I shall read your work again with greater deliberation, and then shall endeavour effectually to improve myself by it.

"I am most truly yours,
"S. T. STURTEVANT."

The substance of the "Rational Inquiry concerning the Operation of the Stage on the Morals of Society," was published in letters in the "Newcastle-upon-Tyne Courant" during Mr. M'Nicoll's residence in that town. Several valuable letters of approval were found amongst his papers. It may suffice to give extracts from three; the first from the present Venerable Archdeacon Hoare; the second from Dr. Dealtry, Chancellor of the Diocese of Winchester; and the third from the Rev. Thomas Jackson, Editor of the "Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine." The Archdeacon writes to a mutual friend, who had applied to him for his opinion :—

"My dear Sir, "*Hampstead, April 14th*, 1825.

"Your two letters have remained for a long time unanswered, and the reason is this,—that I did not like to give an opinion of the pamphlet upon Dramatic Exhibitions till I had carefully read it; and my engagements of late have been too pressing to enable me to give sufficient time to the perusal. I have, within these few minutes, come to the last page; and can pronounce, without hesitation, that it contains arguments and statements perfectly convincing and irresistible. For popular reading, I think it might be curtailed with advantage, especially in the earlier and later pages; and I have my doubts whether it appears in a sufficiently attractive form to secure a general perusal. Of this, however, I am a very poor judge, and fully recommend you to be guided by Mr. Dealtry's opinion, from whom I received it.

"I remain, very truly yours,
"SAMUEL HOARE."

Dr. Dealtry wrote as follows :—

"My dear Friend, "*Clapham, Oct. 14th*, 1825.

"I am afraid that I am very little qualified to offer any opinion which is at all worth your attention on Mr. M'Nicoll's publication. I lost no time, however, in reading it, and noted down, on the blank margin, two or three thoughts that occurred on the perusal, intending to send you the copy back in that state by way of St. Thomas. As, however, it is very likely that some time may elapse before you can receive it by that channel, I thought it might be better to retain the book for the present, and to write to you at once by the post.

"It appears to me, as a whole, to be a very judicious and

seasonable work. The subject is coolly and candidly examined; every fair allowance is made for the advocates of the stage, and, so far as I can see, their arguments are brought forward with the entire force that belongs to them. In controversial publications this is a circumstance which seldom happens; although I think it to be as inexpedient as it is unjust to act otherwise. Mr. Fox, I remember to have heard, excelled greatly in this respect. He was famous for putting the argument of an adversary in a clearer and more forcible way, than the adversary himself had done: And then the more decisive and complete was the work of demolition.

"Your friend seems to me to be a clear, terse, and forcible reasoner; and, with reasoning people, his arguments can scarcely fail to have considerable weight. The first page, as in Irving, appears to me to be rather hard, and thus far unfortunate, since people are very apt to take their opinion of a book from the impression made by the first few sentences."

After several suggestions on the structure and plan of the work, Dr. Dealtry concludes by saying.—"Perhaps a few reflections on Mason's 'Elfrida and Caractacus,' Gambold's 'Ignatius,' and even on Addison's 'Cato,' as dramas,—some of them not tolerated at all on the stage, and the last, I suppose, not popular, —might illustrate and confirm his positions. But an author is the best judge for himself.

"W. DEALTRY."

The following are the brief remarks of the Rev. Thomas Jackson:—

"My dear Brother, "*London, Jan. 31st*, 1824.

"I am greatly obliged to you for your excellent book on the Stage. I have read it with great delight; and have no hesitation in saying, that it is the best book on the subject I ever met with. The language is beautiful, and the argumentation powerful and convincing,

"Some fine young men, whom I have known since my coming to this place, the sons of Methodist parents, have gone from the theatre to the brothel, and from thence to their graves. Do take some means to get your book immediately published, and brought into general circulation: It is greatly needed, and the title is a good one: It will attract attention.

"Yours most heartily,

"THOMAS JACKSON."

The whole of Mr. M'Nicoll's sermons having been published on particular occasions, and generally in the form of separate pamphlets, afforded an opportunity for the expression of opinion on their respective merits. On two of these sermons,—the one preached at Leeds, to improve the death of the Princess Charlotte, and the other at Sunderland, on occasion of the death of George III. designated "Divine Providence Illustrated in the Ordination of Political Government,"—we are happy in having the means of presenting the opinion of two very able judges, Dr. Bunting and the late Rev. Richard Watson: The former of whom writes thus :—

"My dear Brother, "*Lambeth, Jan. 27th*, 1818.

"I avail myself of the return of Mr. I. to Leeds, to thank you for the present of your 'Sermon on the Death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales.' I have read it with much satisfaction; and certainly think it one among the very best discourses which I have had the opportunity of perusing on that melancholy subject. It does you credit, and is honourable to the Body of which you are a member.

"The copies for the reviewers have been delivered. But as most of them have already noticed, at some length, the publications of this class, I fear, you must not expect much notice from them.

"My dear Brother, affectionately yours,

"JABEZ BUNTING."

The subjoined is Mr. Watson's sentiments respecting the other sermon :—

"My dear Sir, "*London, June 22nd*, 1820.

"I thank you for your 'Sermon on the Death of the King;' on which, however, I am more incompetent to give an opinion than you are pleased to suppose. But, though I am no critic, I can say, as is common, I know what pleases me, and I have perused it with much pleasure. It was wisely determined, in my judgment, by you, to make use of the occasion to promote a useful purpose, rather than occupy the hour in useless and common-place panegyric; and especially as the state of the times needed the exhibition of the doctrines which your able sermon contains.

"Perhaps, in my views of subjection to civil government, I go

a step farther than you; and yet I should not have been disposed publicly to put the case more strongly than you have done, lest, by overshooting, I should miss the mark: And I am aware, that the question of resistance is a very difficult one. It is an extreme case only, at best, which will warrant it; and it is not well to go too near the point.

"Your main principles are unquestionably irrefragable, if the Scriptures be true; and the manner in which you state them, the course of clear and ingenuous argument you pursue, and the lightings-up of a true eloquence which occur, and in their proper places too, I much admire. The sermon must do good to all who attentively read it; and as for the mawkish sentiment,—that a Christian minister has nothing to do with politics,—it is just as senseless as if it were said, 'He has nothing to do with any of the relative duties.' With party-politics he ought not to meddle in the pulpit; but with Christian politics his conscience and his duty charge him.

"I am, dear Sir, your truly obliged,

"R. WATSON."

Those who transmit their sentiments to posterity in the form of writing, afford a perpetual standard of judgment respecting their mental and moral character much more certain and accurate than any biographical representation. In this case the qualities of a man's mind receive a visible and living type. Though the writings of Mr. M'Nicoll are not numerous, yet they are extremely characteristic, and those who had the happiness of his familiar acquaintance will at once perceive the perfect resemblance between the mental machine and the faithfulness of the impression. Besides the productions of his pen already referred to, he at different times published two or three additional sermons, with other pieces in prose and poetry. Instead, however, of entering into any detailed account, it may suffice to offer a few remarks on the general character of his writings.

Copiousness is one of the most prominent features of Mr. M'Nicoll's style. This will be found to arise out of two causes; namely, the extension of the basis of his argument, and variety of illustration. The sermon on "the glorious Changes which the dying Saint is destined to experience," will fully indicate what is meant by this remark. The argument of this discourse embraces all the changes which take

place in the saint, as referred to in Scripture, from the moment he quits the probationary state. The reasoning on death, hades, the judgment, the union of the body and soul, at the resurrection, and eternal blessedness, will be found to enter most profoundly into all these questions, and to contain many difficult speculations. In traversing these great fields of revelation, we perceive him balancing himself along the extreme edge of the utmost boundary of the revelation, like a man walking on the summit of an alpine glacier. Indeed, it may be questioned whether on some points of his course he does not adventure into the *terra incognita*, which lies in boundless expanse and sublimity, where man in his present state never enters, and the light of revelation but dimly shines. It is the mark of a superior, penetrating, and lofty mind, to be enabled to take up the principles of scriptural truth, and then to carry them forward to all their just and legitimate consequences; but it is equally a sign of true wisdom to know when to pause. It was in Mr. M'Nicoll's nature to penetrate deeply and to soar loftily. While this quality indicates great original powers, when dissevered from sobriety of judgment and an unbending deference to the authority of the word of God, it becomes somewhat dangerous to its possessor. This danger consists, amongst other things, in running religion into theory. Now, religion cannot be proposed as a theory to men, without greatly weakening its Divine authority. It is propounded to us in the Sacred Oracles, not as a mental amusement, a splendid speculation, or as the mere germ of truth to be followed out by human reason, but as a message from God, commanding acquiescence, by the most awful penalties. On the whole, this sermon is a wonderful effort of genius, and must—if we are not greatly mistaken—be one day classed amongst the finest specimens of reason and eloquence combined.

Without the technicalities of argument, all the productions of Mr. M'Nicoll's pen are full of a subtle ratiocination; not an independent reason set up as a demi-god, to which even the light and authority of revelation were called to do homage. It was his practice rather to argue from and out of revelation, than to attempt to cause it to succumb to his reason: Or, perhaps, it would be still more correct to say, that his great delight seemed to be, to trace the agreement betwixt the reason of God, as developed in revelation, and the truth

and character of nature, and the enlightened and unbiassed dictates of that faculty in man. But, irrespective of the subject on which it was exercised, the quality itself is very obvious. Nothing with him is assumed, nothing taken for granted. This, it must be supposed, arose out of the subjects which he undertook to elucidate. Had he engaged to write on many theological topics, and to enforce numerous points of religious experience and duty, it is not at all likely that he would have adopted the argumentative style, but rather have pressed them on the attention and consciences of his auditors by an exegetical and hortatory address.

But even the choice of subjects for discussion is indicative of the bent of an author's mind; and if, instead of dilating on common topics, with a free, easy, and flowing eloquence, he chooses themes which are abstruse, and which, consequently, oblige him to adopt a course of difficult argumentation, this shows that he is most at home in that exercise of his faculties. Mr. M'Nicoll being a poet, and full of imagination, as well as a logician, his argument often ornamented by even a pressure of illustration, he is not always, to some minds, very palpable and easy of comprehension. Hence we know a lady who, determining to fathom his "Argument for the Bible," employed on it the number of perfection, and actually read it seven times. She then declared that she had surmounted all difficulties, could enter fully into his meaning, and understood him well. Excellences are sometimes embarrassing; and it is, perhaps, on the whole, a misfortune that an argumentative mind should possess an exuberance of fancy, or too copious a vocabulary. But one of the causes of trouble to our fair friend was, in all probability, the circumstance that Mr. M'Nicoll's "Argument," though it contains many clear illustrations, yet does not fully complete and finish the author's design. Like "Saturday Evening," and other writings by the author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm," it is full of beautiful germs of thought and valuable suggestions, but it sadly taxes the reader in the employment of his own resources, judgment, and reason, in following out the suggestion to its result. Works of this kind, however, are of great value; and the treatise to which our remarks are applied will be a lasting monument of great skill in the management of an abstruse and difficult argument. The same observations are applicable to the "Sermon on the Death of George III." Very perplexing

questions on Christian politics are taken up, and the argument is conducted in the midst of the shoals and tumultuous waves of that agitating subject, with admirable moderation and clearness; and yet, with an uncompromising adherence to the great principles of the word of God.

But besides eminence of reason, Mr. M'Nicoll was, what the Germans would call, "a spiritualist." Every thing physical, according to his views and feelings, was animated and pervaded by a living spirit, and was full of God. He heard his voice in the thunder and in the tempest; he beheld his power and majesty in the mighty agencies at work in the universe; he tasted his goodness and love in the harmony, utility, beauties, and provisions of nature; he traced his footsteps in all created things, and seemed to take delight to meet him in the lonely mountain, the dark night, by the side of the flowing stream, or on the foaming sea, as well as amid the joys of animated creation, and the fine displays of his glorious perfections, still remaining in the rational world. Christianized by the introduction of Messiah and the peculiar blessings of redemption, portions of Pope's "Universal Prayer," or Thomson's "Hymn of the Seasons," would suit his taste and express his modes of thought and feeling:—

> "To thee, whose temple is all space,
> Whose altar, earth, sea, skies,
> One chorus let all beings raise,
> All nature's incense rise!"

These were the feelings of this excellent man; and as they stood associated with evangelical views of religion and a happy enjoyment of its blessings, they were not only not dangerous to him, but added greatly to the joy and serenity of his spirit. It is, no doubt, the intention of the great Father of the human family that his children should taste and enjoy his goodness in all the modes of its manifestation. When reconciled to him in Christ, this becomes possible; so that, in truth, the peace of the cross can alone restore us to a state in which God can be really enjoyed in his works. Mere sentimentalists and poets separate the material world from Christianity, build independent fanes, set up rival altars, hymn the praises of God, or rather the powers of nature, and invoke their presence and their inspiration. We have much sublime and beautiful poetry constructed on this principle. The Bible does not teach us to seek religion through

the realms of nature, but, having sought and found it at the cross of the Saviour, we are taught to add all its loveliness and blessings to the spiritual and heavenly inheritance. One danger exists, when this taste happens to be possessed by the public teacher of religion: It is that of intermixing the philosophy of nature with evangelical teaching. In seeking the salvation of lost sinners, or, indeed, in pouring consolation into the bosom of the believer, it is requisite to present the great truths, promises, and provisions of the Gospel, to their attention and faith in the most tangible and prominent manner possible. No flowers or garlands plucked from the most beautiful and fragrant garden of earth must be hung on the cross of our Lord. They can add nothing to its glory, and will only tend to withdraw attention from the "One Sacrifice," and attract it to the earthly embellishment.

The power of analysis was much more prominent in Mr. M'Nicoll's mental constitution, than that of combination. That great and useful quality by which the scattered details of truth, fact, principle, and discovery, are harmonized, and applied to some useful practical result, was not possessed by him to any great extent, or, if enjoyed, he took no great pleasure in its employment. His mind loved to expatiate in a mental wilderness, free from restraint. In his hands truth, like matter, seemed almost capable of infinite divisibility. It was only necessary to listen to some of his most elaborate discourses to discover this feature; and it may be found in any of his publications. The bent of his mind seemed to be, to extract as many given results from any single truth as possible, and to place these in an almost endless variety of colouring and aspect. It is evidently this quality which renders some of his writings (as was the case with some of his living discourses) extremely ethical and intangible. Instead of his subjects coming on his reader or hearer in strong, bold, grappling demonstration, they touch him with infinite delicacy; and it is only in the exercise of great abstraction, mental elevation, and the exercise of the most refined feeling, that his course can be exactly traced, his beauties perceived, and his spirit felt. When this can be done, the reader will find himself in a most enchanting Arcadia of mental and spiritual enjoyment and pleasure.

In reading Mr. M'Nicoll's book on the Stage, I thought I discovered a great similarity between the style of that work and some of the best productions of the age of Addison. The thorough knowledge which he discovers of his subject; his acquaintance

with the classics and poets of our own country; the subtlety of argument and delicacy of sentiment; as well as the great beauty and richness of style displayed in many passages, seem to transport one back to the Augustan age of English literature. His familiar acquaintance with the writers of that period is most manifest in this production; and, in arguing the question of the evils of the drama, he takes the disciple of the stage on his own ground, and, instead of denouncing his pleasures by the stern anathema of religion, opposes him in strains and touches of eloquence as delicate and refined as would have been employed by the advocates of this enchanting deception in the purest and best days of its existence.*

But it is most pleasing to know, that, for several of the latter years of Mr. M'Nicoll's sojourn on earth all his peculiar mental qualities merged in an elevated religious state of feeling. He regretted to one who knew him best, that he had not made the Holy Bible more entirely the subject of his studies, and stated his resolution to do so, had he his time to live over again. Few men, it is believed, were capable of tasting with greater relish whatever could be ministered to the mind by knowledge; and yet we find, that a period came when he was led to see its emptiness when dissevered from religion; and he thought, as many others have done, that he had paid too great a price for its attainment. As he has left no record on the subject, we have not now the means of tracing the manner of the sanctifying process which was evidently going on in his mind for a long period before his death; but the Sacred Scriptures, and purely religious and theological writings, became the chief and almost only books to which he devoted his attention; whilst his spirit, conversation, preaching, and general habits, all indicated, that God was preparing him for the solemn change which awaited him.

The following "Sketch of his Character" was read at the close of a funeral sermon preached in Pitt-Street chapel, Liverpool, on occasion of his death, on January 13th, 1836; and may fitly close this imperfect account:—

Mr. M'Nicoll possessed those powers of mind which caused him to stand out from the general mass of mankind in prominent,

* A copy of this work was presented to Sir Walter Scott, some of whose opinions on this subject had been freely canvassed and opposed; and, notwithstanding this diversity of sentiment, he very liberally expressed his approbation of the spirit of fairness, and neatness of style, in which it was written.

definite, and distinctive character. He was one of the men of the age and the community to which he belonged, who could not be lost in the crowd, or mingled, without mark or notice, indiscriminately, amongst the ordinary characters of his profession. Without effort or design on his own part, the prominence of his mental faculties, his ordinary conversation, and even the most ineffective discharge of his public duties, could not but arrest the attention of his contemporaries, and they must at once mark him out as a genius. It is extremely difficult, sometimes, to seize the most prominent features of mind; and, even when so perceived, it is equally difficult, with delicacy, precision, and fidelity, to communicate the impression. In order to bring Mr. M'Nicoll as fully and clearly before you as I can, I shall consider him, in his mental, his ministerial, and his religious character.

1. There is a basis of mental strength, and an element of qualities, in every man, which must give character to all the productions and developements of mind. This is of great importance in religious men, and especially in ministers; for, although Divine grace is the true principle and cause of all holy and sanctified feeling, yet, as the light of the sun is reflected in varied beauty from the different formations of nature, so the light of truth, the power of religious principle, the hallowing influence of the Holy Spirit, and the ennobling tenderness of Christian love, must all take their tone and colouring from the natural characteristics of the mind in which they exist, and from which they are reflected on the attention of the church and the world. If the mind of Mr. M'Nicoll be fairly analyzed, and the distinctive features of his intellect traced to their primary element, I believe he must be ranked amongst the poetic and imaginative class of mankind. Other very strong and vigorous qualities belonged to him; but this was the leading, predominant, and primary. He was a metaphysician. He wrote, sometimes preached, and often conversed with his friends, on subjects of metaphysical science; but it was never in dry and scholastic terms. Even in this subtle field of thought, he invariably invested the most abstruse speculations in the language of fancy and imagination, taking care to clothe his metaphysical forms, as God clothed the spirit of man, in a tangible and beautiful body. He had great acuteness and strong reasoning powers; but, even in the employment of this faculty, fancy was so predominant, that he would begin

his process of arguing at any point where his mind happened to be floating at the time,—the circumference, or the summit of his theme,—and, when questioned, had to find his way down to first principles, sometimes by a difficult and circuitous route. When, however, he laid aside imagination, and took time to adjust his principles and lay his foundation, his deductions, ratiocinations, and modes of illustration were convincing and irresistible. These powers of reasoning and metaphysical subtlety are not at all at variance with our position,—that the leading features of Mr. M'Nicoll's mind were poetic. One of our most eminent and living poets is not more celebrated for the chaste, simple, touching, and natural grace of his verse, than for a subtle, inspiring, or metaphysical spirit, which lives and breathes in every thing he writes.

It was this same spirit which caused Mr. M'Nicoll to dwell much more in the world of ideas than in the world of living things. Hence, he had no taste for business, knew extremely little of secular concerns, and even took no very lively interest in the stirring political questions of his time. His mind sought a purer region; and whilst other men were busily engaged in attaining the rewards of business and ambition, his soul was expatiating in the universe of abstract being, or roaming amidst the beauties of nature, or the great truths of religion. This feature was very strongly marked. Not giving himself to meditate much on worldly things, it followed, that, whilst others were fretting and exciting themselves by the presence or apprehension of impending evils, he was free from care, and lived in great ease and happiness.

A taste for the beautiful, as a feature of Mr. M'Nicoll's peculiar mental constitution, was also very predominant. He had a most lively perception of the beautiful in nature. His friends have listened with the highest pleasure to his descriptions of the picturesque scenery he had beheld on his journeys in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, as well as in various parts of this country. On these occasions he so grouped his different objects, as to present his hearers with a fine ideal landscape; whilst his spirit seemed to throw life into the scenery; and his animated countenance, his sparkling eye, and the action of his hand, indicated the absorption of his soul, and how deeply he had taken the impression of what he was describing to others. But his perception of the beautiful was not limited to living forms. He equally

enjoyed whatever was exquisite and delicate in sentiment, in music, and in literature. He was a diligent and, at intervals, a constant reader of both the ancient and modern poets, a great admirer of the fine arts, and had himself, as many here know, a great taste for music. I have seen him sitting in perfect tranquillity, reading Horace or Virgil in the midst of a hundred people at a public meeting, during the most exciting debates, amidst clamour and vociferation sufficient to disturb the equanimity of any mind which had not amazing powers of abstraction, or of strength to rise from the passing excitement of the moment to fasten on pictures of hidden and ideal beauty. Even his well-known taste for old books may be intimately connected with the poetic bias of his mind. Nothing, indeed, at first sight, appears more discordant than a relish for the living fragrance and beauties of nature, and a fondness for old and antiquated literature. But for the same reason that the man of imagination lingers with delight in the midst of the hoary grandeur of rocks and mountains, the ruins of forsaken castles, and the graves and monuments of the departed dead, so he may, by the exercise of the same taste, take pleasure in antiquated forms of thought and modes of writing. Be this as it may, we have another certain indication that the nature of our beloved friend's mental constitution was essentially imaginative: It is his copiousness and power of invention. When he could be got fairly into a subject, instead of dwindling in his hands, it appeared a creation. Taking his start from some point of original thought, he, with almost intuitive power of invention, threw around it, as from a centre, sentiment on sentiment, adorned with sparkling beauties of expression and illustration, till the primary idea was lost in the creations of imagination, just as the seed is forgotten in the growth, foliage, blossoms, and fruit of the plant. As in the case of most men of genius, if any thing dry, barren, and halting, was ever discovered, it was in the commencement only of the exercise. When he had fairly escaped the breakers around the shore, and felt himself out in deep water, he made rapid way, carrying his audience much farther than they expected to go.

2. A man who was so strikingly marked in his mental constitution, must of necessity be so in his ministerial qualifications. In his doctrinal sentiments Mr. M'Nicoll was thoroughly evangelical, and subordinated all his opinions to the authority of the word of God. He held the doctrine of the Holy Trinity,

—the proper Deity of the Son and the Spirit,—the atonement of Christ, and justification by faith alone;—regeneration and sanctification, together with the eternity of future rewards and punishments, as essential and fundamental verities of religion. He had read all the best authors, ancient and modern, on these questions: They lay at the basis of his own ministry, and he was always prepared to illustrate and defend them; and, instead of merely making them heads in a common-place system of theology, he studied them separately and fully. It was Mr. M'Nicoll's practice to take up some grand question in divinity as a theme, and not only study it by the exercise of his own original powers, but collect the opinions of all the authors within his reach, and then, uniting the scattered rays of truth in a common focus, throw the illumination on the minds of his congregations. In this way he was engaged on the question of the Divinity of the Son of God, as the Son, a short time ago; and he told me, that he was so deeply interested, and fully satisfied with the subject, that he should be obliged to preach on it in order to get it dismissed from his mind. The manner in which he entered into subjects of theology, if not singular, was striking. He often pursued a question to such lengths, that his mind was so entirely absorbed that he could not free himself so as to attend to the more ordinary duties of his calling. He informed me that when he was called to preach a sermon in this chapel, on the death of the late Peter Jones, he was so taken up with the matters of the discourse, that for several weeks he could scarcely feel and consider himself an inhabitant of this world. For days and weeks he would pursue a topic, to the exclusion of all other subjects of reflection, till, having mastered the difficulties, pushed it to the very verge of other regions of truth, or exhausted the powers of his mind, he would turn to other studies. In the practice of preaching itself, Mr. M'Nicoll was extremely variable: This may be partly accounted for from the peculiarity just mentioned. When his powers were needed for immediate employment, they were sometimes, as we have seen, deeply absorbed in other speculations. Beside this, Mr. M'Nicoll was more an extemporaneous preacher than most persons who occupy the pulpit. His preparations were very meagre; the thoughts of his discourses were written on the least scraps of paper. In consequence of this, his ministry

necessarily greatly depended on his health and on his congregations; but when circumstances favoured the effort, when he had prepared himself fully for his task, and had a people disposed to listen to him, his preaching partook of every quality of greatness. It always rested on sound doctrinal views. Originality of thought, reason, pathos, animation, imagination, together with a deep concern for the good of souls and the glory of God, united to make him a most eloquent and powerful pulpit orator. On these great occasions, his mind appeared to expand and rise to all the dignity and solemnity of his theme; and he poured forth the torrents of a noble and overpowering eloquence, to the great delight and edification of his audiences. He then never attempted to spare himself, but put forth all his strength. His conceptions of God, of the great work of redemption, of the riches of Divine grace, of the beauties and privileges of experimental religion, of the awful realities and stupendous importance of eternity, and of the final state of all men, were most profound, and painted in vivid and lively colours. His action was perfectly natural and unstudied; and, whilst the greatness of his subjects roused him to the highest animation, the different topics of his discourse modulated the tones of his mellifluous voice in beautiful and musical cadences.

The affection now manifested towards him by all classes, shows in what light he was held as a pastor. Those who knew him best, loved and esteemed him most. Wherever he was stationed, he ranked amongst his private and intimate friends, all the most intelligent, pious, and well-informed of the people. He was gladly and cordially hailed in their families; and his conversation, being always instructive, entertaining, and religious, was listened to with delight. Indeed, his colloquial powers were amongst his most remarkable gifts. He was never obtrusive or dogmatical. Ease, simplicity, and freedom invariably marked his conversation; and, when excited, it sometimes rose to great brilliancy and beauty. From the stores of his highly-cultivated mind he interested the younger branches of families, whilst, at the same time, he delighted and instructed the elder. Even persons indifferent to religion heard his discourse on sacred subjects with toleration, and often with silent and approving pleasure. He had a heart to sympathize with all persons; and if on the subject of his pastoral character any fault was found, it did not relate to the inquisitorial

obtrusiveness of his visits to his flock, but that they were not sufficiently frequent. Whilst Mr. M'Nicoll held himself bound to be faithful to the church to which he was united as a minister, —and to which there is good reason to know he was from principle and affection cordially attached,—he maintained a most catholic spirit towards all other denominations of Christians. Indeed, not a spark of bigotry dwelt in his soul. He was too noble in his nature, had studied Christianity on too large a scale, and entertained too lofty views of the destinies of the church and of the world, to be a sectarian bigot; and, hence, he was always ready to assist and help forward all the religious institutions of the day.

3. The religious character of Mr. M'Nicoll is of most importance.

In his case religion did not stand out in stiff and formal singularities; but interningled its principles, devotions, and joys, with all the feelings of his mind, and the every-day business and pursuits of life. He did not form his character on the frigid notions of the ascetic, or the monk; but, taking the Gospel as the model of his spirit, conversation, and life, he blended the amenities, charities, and duties of the Word of God in all things; and religion in him had all the simplicity of a natural element of his moral constitution. Hence, when he walked the streets, or attended any of his distant places, he appeared, almost invariably, with a religious book in his hand, in which he read occasionally as he passed along, to furnish his mind with profitable matter of reflection. He also entered on religious conversation in the presence of strangers, with the utmost ease and freedom from embarrassment. He never had to call home his powers, but discoursed with a familiarity natural and habitual to the feelings and tastes of his mind.

Purity is another characteristic of Mr. M'Nicoll. After a long and intimate acquaintance, I do not recollect ever hearing a gross sentiment from his lips. He not only taught the purity of the Gospel, but in a very high degree lived in it himself. His spirit caught in this respect the sanctity, greatness, and elevation of the subjects of his meditations and studies. Like Moses, when he had been on the Mount, his mind shone in the radiance of that light and holiness which an intimate walk with God can alone impart. If the conversation be "in heaven, the heart must be there also."

We believe, the trust of our beloved friend in God was habitual and constant. He had much in his private walk, his public employments, and the state of his numerous family, to put his confidence to the test. He never betrayed any distrust. The Saviour's merit, and the all-sufficient grace of God, were the grounds of his personal reliance; and his mind was too much enlightened, and influenced by sanctified feeling, to believe that those in whom he had an interest were the sport of chance. On one occasion, in a state of apprehended danger, when Mrs. M'Nicoll betrayed some emotion and fear, he exclaimed, "Never fear, my dear; there is not such a thing as a fatherless child in the world." He meant to intimate by this, that, though he might be called from her by death, God would be the Father of their children. This was not the sentiment and feeling of the moment, but the habitual state of his mind; and it was carried not only into the anticipated event of his family being left without a head, but into all the occurrences of life, and tended to produce that settled peace and tranquillity of which he was so remarkable an instance. Of all the men I ever saw, Mr. M'Nicoll always appeared to me as the happiest. Whatever combination of influences might produce it, his was a happy religion. No envy, moroseness, melancholy, discontent, or ambitious inquietude ever darkened the fair sunshine of his soul. He never put himself to grapple with impossibilities, to fight with the ghosts of imaginary evils, to repine over the past, or anticipate some evil to come. He placed himself in faith on the current of providential events; he was thankful for the comforts and privileges he enjoyed, derived good from every occurrence, and rose from the present, to taste, in anticipation, all the glory of the future.

Although death came suddenly, he was not unlooked for, and, we believe, not unwelcome. To my certain knowledge Mr. M'Nicoll had been expecting sudden death for the past seven or eight years. When we were together in London, he often mentioned it as an event upon which he calculated, and even then expected soon. Since I have been in Liverpool, he has repeated the same apprehension, with this difference, that, at the first period I refer to, he seemed to look forward to it with some fear; in the latter, with pleasure. In a long conversation, held a short time ago, as we walked up and down by the side of the Cemetery; after largely dwelling on the shortness and vanities of

life, together with the glories of the heavenly state; he, with great solemnity and strong feeling, stated his willingness and readiness to go, whenever it might please God to call him. This was not the only conversation of the same kind; but, on several occasions, he entered most delightfully into these subjects, and spoke of religion and heaven, as a man on the verge of another world. The impression was so deep on my own mind, that I went home from one of these interviews, and said in my own family, "Our friend Mr. M'Nicoll will not live long." Being asked, why I thought so, the reply was, "His soul is mellowing for heaven: God is preparing him for himself." So it has proved. But, after all, sudden death is always unexpected at the time. He was peculiarly happy on the evening of his decease, in the bosom of his family. His elder son had come from London, on a visit; one or two younger ones from the schools; and, by a merciful arrangement of Providence, the whole eleven were present. With smiles of delight, he beheld them around his table; spoke freely and cheerfully to them; and then, in the spirit of the patriarch Jacob, when he leaned on his staff, and blessed his children before he died, he knelt down, entered into their several cases, earnestly and pathetically besought the Divine blessing on them, commended them to His care and love, and then went up stairs, and in a few moments expired.

"How many die as sudden, not as safe!"

AN ESSAY

ON

COVETOUSNESS.

AN ESSAY,

&c.

I. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE division of the passions into two great classes, the irascible and concupiscible, has, no doubt, in a philosophical point of view, some material advantages. But with regard to the passions in their character of *vices*, the inspired writers, addressing all ranks of society, have adopted a more obvious and profitable classification. They describe those evils—by the *source* from which they spring: "From within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness:"—By their *objects:* "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life:"—And by their *seat* and *subject:* As "filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit;" "the fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind."

This last distinction points to a difference in the two kinds of vice, which perhaps will partly account for the paucity of practical writings, on one kind, while we happily abound with powerful and valuable pieces on the other. The vices of the mind have less of the garb of vice, are less gross and palpable, than those of the flesh. They are therefore less the subject of attention, less understood, and less revolting in the first recognition of them. Though the character of their secret and operative principles is positive, that of their appearances and effects in many instances is negative. They are so mixed up with the ordinary, as also indeed with the laudable, transactions of life, as in no small degree to escape blame, and even observation: And, in almost every view, the treatment of such subjects is peculiarly difficult. It is less easy, as well as less pleasing, to paint an Ugolino than a subject of perfect regularity and beauty. Such vices—always more or less aërial and evanescent, unless when

carried on to extreme consequences—seem to pass from the hands of at least an inattentive writer, as if they had scarcely an existence; as if, however, they were nearly incapable of definition and description: And should he partly succeed in holding up to view the evils themselves, the chances are still greatly against him in attempting to fix them with conviction on the guilty mind. Practical authors are not, perhaps, sufficiently aware of the greatness of such sins; hence they seize, with a prompt but becoming zeal, on excesses of the appetites, and of some passions, by which they are struck with disgust and indignation; while the "desires of the mind" are left to work their secret demolitions by slow and steady sap. Of these most dangerous vices—so concealed and cowardly, so sinuous and dissembling—we might particularly mention unbelief, ingratitude, envy, and covetousness.

With regard to this last-named crime, one reason, perhaps, why it has not more frequently been treated with vigour and effect, either by the press or from the pulpit, has been the hopelessness of success on the part of many who would gladly be of service in a matter of such importance. Locke observes, with equal truth and discouragement: "Let never so much propability hang on one side of a covetous man's reasoning, and money on the other, it is easy to foresee which will outweigh." But divines ought not to be discouraged. The sanction of omnipotent grace is promised to their dutiful endeavours.

Some have also thought that the vices are always touched with best effect by the attractive exhibition of the contrary virtues. The inspired writers were, however, of an opposite opinion, as their constant practice proves. Besides, man is furnished with a sense of revulsion and abhorrence; which, when awakened by just and striking views of vice, very powerfully impel the inclination to bend towards goodness.

The current of religious writings seems to be on the side of doctrines and experience, to the partial neglect, at least, of practical duties. The effective plan, undoubtedly, is to unite the whole in every individual effort, as St. Paul has exemplified in his epistle to the Romans. The foundation without a superstructure is futile; the superstructure without a foundation is impossible. The just and necessary connexion between principle and practice should be invariably shown. "I have not shunned," says an apostle, "to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

To this grand conjunction of evangelical truths, the power of a divine blessing will be unfailingly annexed ; without which, indeed, the whole force even of scriptural argument and eloquence would be altogether nugatory.

In no other way, we believe, will the subtle and pernicious crime in question be banished from the earth. In all ages moral philosophers and poets have chosen it as a fruitful theme ; perhaps more because it was peculiarly adapted to set off their wit and genius, than with the hope of success in removing the evil ; and it must be confessed that, with the exception of the Holy Scriptures, nothing can exceed the force of argument, and the mingled sharpness and sweetness of satire, contained in their writings on this subject. In these respects Horace probably excelled them all ; and his effusions were much prized by the superior ranks of society, and sung by the populace. Men read all those celebrated works with avidity ; and, charmed, they read again ; and again they loudly sounded forth their admiration of such enchanting productions ; but remained the same slaves to the love of gain as before. Hence Longinus terms avarice, "that disease of which the whole world is sick beyond a cure."

But after all, this is said to be the sin of the religious world ; and ecclesiastics in particular are charged with the love of money as the most palpable and prevalent of all their besetments, with the exception of the love of power.

Most unhappily, there is but too much truth in these remarks ; yet let not Christianity be blamed for the incorrigible wickedness of human nature. The difference, in this matter, between Christianity and philosophy, is this,—that the latter did not produce a consciousness of the disease ; or a desire to accept a cure, supposing this consciousness to have been effected ; or that, in case of both, the remedy accepted was absolutely powerless. In all these respects, Christianity transcends philosophy, as far as the force which moves the universe exceeds the feeblest energies of infancy. These important changes are invariably and perfectly effected by the Gospel, except in the case of a deliberate and fixed resistance of Divine authority ; and to say, that the Gospel, to be a perfect remedy, ought in no case, and in no sense, to fail of its effect, would be to blame the Almighty Author of the universe because the laws of the *moral* are not applicable in the same mechanical and certain manner with those of the *material* world. The fact, however, is indisputable, that Christianity has

produced more instances of a true and lasting change from sin to holiness,—of the churl becoming liberal, and a greater number of noble philanthropists in particular, than all other systems—infidel, moral, literary, and religious—put together.

And with regard to the ministers of religion, though amongst them shameful instances of worldly-mindedness must be acknowledged and lamented; yet, on the other hand, the numbers of that body who have been distinguished for disinterestedness and liberality are sufficiently great to mark the generous tendency of the profession, and the truth and power of the religion which they teach. A long list of instances of splendid charity might be given from that sacred calling, superior to any that has yet adorned the history of other classes of society. Nor could this be overlooked by the learned Lord Falkland: When asked why he chose so frequently to associate with clergymen, he replied, "Because I find they possess more of knowledge and of virtue than any other class of men."

Avarice, on the whole, because of its great prevalence in the religious world, because of the subtlety with which it makes its lodgment in the heart, because of the extreme tenacity of its hold, and because of the ruin which it occasions daily to innumerable souls, is a subject, doubtless, of no ordinary importance, and deserves a far more rigid and general attention than has hitherto been commonly bestowed upon it. This hateful vice is worse than the pestilence that walketh at noon-day; the Pontine marshes are less deleterious; shipwreck, earthquake, and battle, are not so dangerous; and happy were it for the church, and for the world, if some great alarm of so dreadful an evil were more frequently and forcibly produced in the public mind.

But whether infatuated worldlings will listen, or turn a deaf ear, to the friendly voice of warning and remonstrance, it is the imperative, though painful, duty of the ministers of religion to execute their solemn commission sometimes with the weeping tenderness of Jeremiah, and again with the lofty thunders of Isaiah, or the roughened zeal and argument of Ezekiel. The presence of the wealthy and the noble must not daunt the messenger of wrath to the impenitent. He is awfully responsible to the Divine mandate: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." The consciousness of his own poverty must not weaken the sense of that tremendous

authority with which he is invested. If, along with the promised rewards of eternity, he occupy an advanced station in the ministry, and, in a secular point of light, be well paid for the performance of his duty; this only adds to his obligation, while it greatly augments the power of his influence in the circles of the opulent. Or should he be but young in years, like Timothy, it will perfectly accord with the modesty of youth, whatever hoary-headed misers may pretend to the contrary, that he "charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." It may be feared, that to some degree of worldly prudence, of fawning and dependence on the rich, and a cowardly fear of giving them offence, of which the ministers of the Gospel are sometimes guilty, may be attributed no little share of the worldly-mindedness so justly charged against professors of religion. Such ministers, in such a day of trial as was braved by our Reformers, would have fallen beneath temptation, as autumnal leaves before the blast. Not so the Latimers and Knoxes of those times, whom nothing could induce to abate the admirable boldness with which they took their stand against the vices of the rich and great; like oaks of ancient growth, scarcely groaning to the storm.

We have already noticed the uncommon difficulty, not of managing this subject in a scriptural and rational manner, but of prevailing with the covetous to change his character. The design of this essay is not so much, however, to instruct in the art of fixing guilt on others, or on particular persons pointed out for that purpose, as to furnish a variety of inquiries for self-examination. Had we all, as professors of the Christian religion, the candour to admit, that, whatever be our rank in life, we are, at all events, in danger of being infected with the love of the world; and, instead of boasting that WE are perfectly incapable of so mean a vice, did we dread the danger, and search and try ourselves with great caution and impartiality, to detect the lurking evil which may possibly have found a lodging in the heart, we might make, perhaps, some profitable though mortifying discoveries; or safety, at least, might attend the inquiry.

II. THE TERMS.

IN considering the peculiar nature of this vice, something may be learned from the names and epithets by which it is

described. In language, even in single terms, whether viewed in their formation, or application, is embodied no small share of the collective wisdom, or, at least, of the common opinions and sentiments, of mankind. And so far as these are found to harmonize with Scripture, they give a striking confirmation to the truth and value of its sentiments. Of the numerous terms commonly employed to express this vice, those of the inspired pages have greatly the advantage, not only in point of authority, but also in perspicuity, and certainty of signification. A selection from the whole may suffice for the present.

Though the English phrase "to covet" is sometimes used in a good sense, as "covet earnestly the best gifts," the word πλεονεξία in the New Testament, commonly rendered "covetousness," is uniformly used in a bad sense, as signifying "the inordinate desire of more;" that is, of more than others have,—of more than God approves,—of more than, all things rightly considered, is necessary and proper. This implies independence on God, and is direct idolatry, because it is giving the heart to a creature. The word is also used in the sense of excessive ardour, and fierceness of pursuits; and is thus applied to sensual desires by St. Paul, where he speaks of those "who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with GREEDINESS," or covetousness.

The same sense of violent and irregular desire is found in another word, ἐπιθυμία, commonly rendered "concupiscence." It signifies "unceasingly to burn with desire," and is the term used by the Septuagint to express the covetousness forbidden in the tenth commandment.

A third word, φιλαργυρία, however, is perhaps still more descriptive of this vice, as it more expressly and definitely points out its object. It is literally translated, "the love of money." On this one object the covetous man has placed his chief hope and desire. Here he has fixed his seat, and here he reigns and revels in the shameful voluptuousness of his prohibited enjoyment. But as money is the representative, and contains the elements, of all other property, and is professedly and primarily sought for the sake of other objects, this vice naturally extends itself to these, and travels in imagination and with accumulating passion from the means to the end, and from the end to the means, till the distinction is entirely lost, and the wretched simpleton, with apparent philosophical conviction and gravity, iden-

tifies the one with the other, even in all his serious and deliberate judgments concerning them.

With respect to the terms by which this vice is designated in the writings of the Old Testament, the sense is nearly the same with that of the examples just adduced. Of the Hebrew terms chiefly used, one, בצע, is expressive of the actual injustice, and sometimes violence, to which this passion leads, signifying "to cut or tear away the property of another by dishonest practices." "Behold," saith God, "I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee." Two others, חמד, אוה, bear some analogy in signification to the second of the Greek words already mentioned, and imply "strong desire to obtain certain objects upon which the affections are placed." In the Septuagint ἐπιθυμία is used of one who is under the dominion of this passion, and of whom Solomon observes, "He coveteth greedily all the day long."

But among those classes of mankind where revelation has not been permitted to cast the bright and steady light of heaven upon this subject, the evil has always existed in its palpable and varied forms; and the sentiments of men respecting it, as we have already noticed, are recorded in the very names by which they have distinguished it. It was not necessary, on the part of the inspired writers, to trace with minuteness all the shades of difference which exist among the numerous kinds of covetousness. It was sufficient to mark out for reprobation the great and comprehensive principle of worldly-mindedness, as seen in certain striking instances of its powerful operation. Still, we may collect some useful hints from the common appellations to which we have referred.

Covetousness, in the popular use of the term, is understood to refer more especially to the natural disposition, the strength of the passion, and its grasping at property in general. Cupidity and avarice are habits gradually acquired, and have special regard to money. Hence a discriminating writer observes: "As the love of appropriation is an innate characteristic in man, that of accumulating, or wanting to accumulate, which constitutes covetousness, will show itself in some persons among the first indications of character. Where the prospect of amassing great wealth is set before a man, as in the case of a governor of a distant province, it will evince great virtue in him, if his cupidity be not excited. The covetous man seeks to add to what he has; the avaricious

man only strives to retain what he has; the covetous man sacrifices others to indulge himself; the avaricious man will sometimes sacrifice himself to indulge others; for generosity, which is opposed to covetousness, is sometimes associated with avarice."

"To hoard" signifies "to store up treasures secretly;" and comprehensively implies the withholding of property from the many useful purposes to which it might be applied. Amongst these are the legitimate advantages which property could procure to the owner himself. Hence the words, "miser," "parsimony," and "penurious," refer to the real poverty and wretchedness of the infatuated possessor. There are other names and epithets of a low and barbarous kind, preferred even by men of taste as the energetic vehicle of their abhorrence, and applied very commonly to the character and conduct of the covetous man, showing the great contempt in which this despicable vice is held by almost every class of people. We ought not, perhaps, to except the covetous themselves; as they often thus express their dislike of avarice in others, either through a deluding ignorance of their own guilt, or some secret disapprobation of the conscious vileness to which they are miserably and helplessly enslaved.

It may be observed, that the varieties described in this vocabulary of Mammon must not be confined to their respective subjects. Several of them will be found in some instances to exist in the same subject, and to be mingled in different degrees and proportions in different subjects. The covetous man may neither be a miser nor penurious. In other instances he may have all the forms adverted to, and each, perhaps, in a very high degree. Covetousness, however, seems to be the genus; the others are the several species. But the various terms are even by the best writers often used indiscriminately, not as severally descriptive, but merely as different titles of the same great evil.

III. THE SUBJECT DESCRIBED.

Thus, in the present question, we naturally pass from words to things. What, then, is covetousness, in the proper yet comprehensive notion of the subject? Let the Judge of all the earth reply. In the phrases and sentences of Scripture, we more fully learn the nature of this vice; but we repeat, that already may be gathered from the verbal intimations given above, the

great truth, on this point,—that "the love of the world," denounced by St. John, is, in all its varieties, fundamentally and essentially its character and principle. Circumstances may in many instances prevent its more striking manifestations; but the germinating seed is there, as murder in the passion of him who "is angry with his brother," even when he abstains from the gross commission of that crime. The rapacity of the wolf lies concealed in the helpless cub.

Covetousness, then, chiefly consists of three things: 1. An irregular and overweening or excessive fondness for property in general, but principally discovered by the love of money. The evil lies not simply in loving, but in loving improperly; as in another case referred to by our Lord: "He that loveth his life shall lose it;" for to love our life in one sense is a duty. 2. From this there follows an inordinate desire for more; not merely for more than is possessed by another, which, we may observe, is one essential meaning of the word, but for more indefinitely, or infinitely;—for no amount of gain can satisfy the restless and unreasonable hunger of a covetous disposition. He who shows this insatiable desire of riches is described by Solomon as "greedy of gain." 3. As a consequence of this, improper means are used to attain the object desired. Those means may be improper through excess of application, though lawful in themselves; or in their own nature, as acts of injustice. In this latter sense the word is sometimes used in both Testaments:—"So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain, which taketh away the life of the owners thereof." "Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." "An heart they have exercised with covetous practices." The world, indeed, may call them "honest," provided no legal objection could lie against them in a court of civil law; but the law of God condemns the entire principle, and the whole of its operations, however speciously veiled by appearances of virtue.

IV. THE SOURCES OF THIS VICE.

THE true nature of this vice may be farther illustrated by a brief view of the causes from which it takes its rise. Some of these are the common spring of all the vices, while some are more immediately connected with covetousness.

The most obvious is the dreadful corruption of our whole

nature by what is eminently termed "the fall." By this the very fountain of our character and actions is poisoned. Through this we are altogether ignorant of God and of his will, as also of ourselves, and of the moral dangers and right uses of the world around us. We are instinctively inclined to moral evil; and when subsequently we are called to virtue and glory by Jesus Christ, we refuse to obey the call from a natural and deeply-rooted enmity to God. All this is confirmed by early habits of inattention to Divine truth, and of intercourse with the creature, which we practically put in the place of the Chief Good,—the Infinite Creator. This corruption runs in various channels, and with different degrees of intensity towards all forbidden objects. All are equally by nature devoid of the Divine life; but as in dead bodies all are not equally putrescent, so in moral death all the numerous individuals are not equally corrupt. Nor is the characteristic and palpable corruption of each always of the same kind. One may be naturally more inclined or determined to one description of evil than another; and all this may result from original constitution previous to the impressive influence of circumstances. The prerogative of God originally to divide, or restrain, or modify the general current, is not here the question. We are chiefly interested in the *fact* of the case. One great stream of the general tide is covetousness. This is evident from the early and powerful propensity of individuals to this particular evil, from the pertinacity of its hold, and the extent of its prevalence in opposition to counteracting circumstances. The covetousness so native to the heart is of all others the most deeply-seated, and certainly by much the least susceptible of cure; and where circumstances, not counteracting, but tempting, and confirmatory of the original disposition, concur in the case, and the whole is unresisted, the correction of the vice may be viewed as almost hopeless.

Unbelief shares deeply in the guilt of worldly-mindedness. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." He who departs from the living God will turn to other gods. Among these, Mammon stands conspicuous. The mind devoid of the Creator must be filled with the creature. In proportion to our want of faith will be our care and anxiety respecting the succours and satisfactions of this world. "Jesus said, If God so clothe the grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you, O ye of

little faith?" Thus he who loves money makes gold his hope, and says to the fine gold, "Thou art my confidence."

This unbelief is both a natural and intentional hostility to the truth of God in general; in consequence of which, its declarations in regard to his infinite sufficiency, and the absolute inanity of all created things without his favour, seem but as idle tales. As faith is not only the credence of the mind, but also a grace of the heart,—trust in God, produced by the Holy Spirit; so its contrary is not merely the disbelief of the truth, but an aversion to the subject, from which the soul rebounds to things more congenial to its taste. The origin of belief and disbelief lies deeper than the deliberative judgment, and must be fetched from the most secret predilections of the heart. The unbelief of the Jews was substantially their hatred of the person and doctrine of Christ. It is because men really believe in the paramount importance of earthly things that St. Peter says, "An heart they have exercised with covetous practices." A man's real belief is clearly known by his actions. A mere opinion of treasures hidden at some great depth in his grounds might produce no effect upon him; a firm conviction would infallibly determine him to dig in full search of them. Thus worldly-minded men are perfectly persuaded, that there is less of good in God, and more of solid satisfaction in the creature, than the Holy Scriptures have invariably asserted; and they act accordingly. Saving faith has also a most important influence upon the mind itself. It is the principle of the Divine life, and infallibly accompanied by regeneration; in consequence of which the soul is susceptible of right views, and of due impressions from the truth, both respecting heavenly and earthly things. To be destitute of this faith is, therefore, to be shorn of our moral strength, and to present a depth of corruption suited to any powerful temptation from without. These remarks are not, indeed, confinable to the subject of covetousness; though to this, we may judge both from the analysis and history of the crime, they apply with a peculiar propriety and force.

One great source of the evil in question is improper self-love, or, strictly speaking, selfishness. The corruption of the heart is the great trunk, of which pride, sensuality, and covetousness, are the three principal stems, with their respective offshoots of particular and subordinate vices. The covetous man never lifts up his eyes but with a view to himself. Even his occasional

bursts of apparent liberality originate in selfishness; and, after a progress of perhaps unobserved sinuosity, return to the same point. Selfishness is an exclusive and constant regard to our own interest because it is our own. This disposition tends directly to shrivel up the mind even to the extreme of narrowness, and to render it unserviceable to the interests of others. It appears in the proud and the sensual passions, but no where so palpably as in the vice we are now considering. Here it is both the cause and the effect of covetousness, and that in the full height of its obstinacy and power. An accurate and ample view of selfishness will greatly illustrate its connexion with covetousness. This view is furnished to our hands by a master, the famous Duke de la Rochefoucault. He speaks of human nature as he finds it, —deeply, universally, incurably corrupted,—because he speaks without regard to the renovating power of grace. He is, however, much opposed by some who contend for the natural disinterestedness of man. If this natural disinterestedness refer to the physiology of the mind, and to the supposition, that if man were not corrupt he would instinctively do good to others on the same principle on which he seeks his own good,—namely, from love to good as such, to good in general,—we see no great inconsistency between the parties. The difference seems to be chiefly this, that one describes man as he is, and the other as he ought to be. The history of mankind, we fear, at once originates and confirms, at least, the substance of the following description by this celebrated writer. It discovers, we conceive, more profound and more instructive views of this grand master-spring of covetousness, than is commonly to be met with among philosophic teachers. We shall, perhaps, be excused if we give this unrivalled paragraph without mutilation :—

"Self-love is the love of self, and of every thing for its sake. When fortune gives the means, self-love idolizes self, and tyrannizes over others. It never rests or fixes any where from home. If it settle on external things, it is only to extract, as the bee doth from flowers, whatever may be serviceable. Nothing so impetuous as its desires; nothing so secret as its designs; nothing so artful as its conduct. Its subtleness is inexpressible; its metamorphoses surpass those of Ovid, and its refinements those of chemistry. We can neither fathom the depth, nor penetrate the obscurity, of its abyss. There, concealed from the most piercing eye, it makes numberless turnings and windings.

There is it often invisible to itself. There, it conceives, breeds, and cherishes, without being sensible of it, an infinity of different inclinations; some so monstrous, that it either knows them not when brought forth, or cannot prevail on itself to own them. From the gross darkness that envelopes it, springs the ridiculous notion entertained of itself. Thence its errors, ignorance, and silly mistakes. Thence sensations are imagined dead, which yet are but asleep. It sits down quietly when only taking breath for a new chase; and thinks all appetite lost because for the present rather sated. But the thick mist which hides it from itself hinders it not from seeing perfectly whatever is without; thus resembling the eye, that sees all things except itself. In great concerns and important affairs, where the violence of desire summons the whole attention, it sees, perceives, understands, invents, penetrates, and divines all things. One would be tempted to suspect, that each passion had its respective magic. No cement so close and strong as its attachments; which in vain it attempts to break or dissolve even upon impending misery. Yet, sometimes, what could not, for years, be accomplished with the cruellest efforts, are effected without trouble. Whence we conclude, that by itself are its desires inflamed, rather than by the beauty and merit of the objects; that its own taste heightens and embellishes them; that itself is the game it pursues; and its own inclination followed, rather than the things which seemed to be the objects of inclination. Composed of contrarieties, it is imperious and obedient, sincere and hypocritical, merciful and cruel, timid and bold. Its inclinations, according to different tempers, devote it sometimes to glory, sometimes to wealth, sometimes to pleasure. These change as age and experience alter. Whether it has really many inclinations, or one only, is matter of indifference; because it can split itself into many, or collect itself into one, just as is convenient or agreeable. Inconstant and numberless are the changes, besides those that happen from external causes: Inconstant through levity, through love, through novelty, through satiety, through disgust, through inconstancy itself: Capricious; and labouring, with eagerness and incredible pains, to obtain what is no ways advantageous, nay, even hurtful; yet pursued merely as a present affection: Whimsical; and often exerting intense application, in employments the most trifling; delighting in the most insipid, and preserving all its haughtiness in the most contemptible: Attendant on all ages

and conditions; living every where,—on every thing,—on nothing: Easy either in enjoyment or want; joining those who are at variance with it; entering into their schemes and (wonderful!) hating itself, conspiring its own destructions, labouring to be undone, desiring merely to exist, and, that granted, consents to be its own enemy. We are not, therefore, to be surprised, if, sometimes closing with the most rigid austerity, it enters boldly into a combination against itself; because what is lost in one respect is regained in another. We think it relinquishes pleasures, when it only suspends, or changes them; and even when discomfited, and we seem to be rid of it, we find it triumphant in its own defeat. Such is self-love! and man's life a strong, a continued agitation! The sea is its representative; in the flux and reflux of whose waves self-love may behold a lively representation of the turbulent succession of the thoughts, and the eternal commotions of the mind."

Such is the general character of this tremendous principle; and we may judge of its potency and effect when its concentrated energies are directed towards the one great object of securing worldly wealth. All sin is more or less deceitful: Self-love, we have seen, is singularly so: But "the deceitfulness of riches," that is, of the heart in its attachment to them, surpasses all the rest. The word rendered "self-love" occurs only once in the New Testament, φιλαυτία;* but then it stands at the head of a long and horrible array of epithets descriptive of the deepest criminality, and is observed by Macknight to take this bad pre-eminence "because the other vices originate from, and terminate in, selfishness." Now the next in order, as the first-born of this hateful parent, is φιλαργυρία, "the love of money."

These two chief sources of a covetous disposition—original depravity, and its grand modification, self-love—give rise to other causes, which sometimes powerfully concur to form a character of covetousness. For instance: The passion of desire, warped from its original simplicity and innocence, perverted and inordinate, reckless and ungoverned, self-willed and tenacious, may fix on wealth as its object. The object is distant while the passion is enchained to the body; but even the difficulty thus occasioned to the mind only increases its appetite and misery together. This desire is allowed to urge its gratification, not from reason, but merely because it is desire. The chief difference between

* 2 Tim. iii. 2.

this and the restless, crying fancies of children, lies in the stupid obstinacy with which it perseveres. Its intensity increases with its existence, till, like a lion's whelp, it insensibly acquires a strength and resoluteness which nothing can withstand; the strongest arguments are now opposed to it in vain, and even the sacred services of religion are despised by it, as leviathan "laugheth at the shaking of a spear." "And they come to thee," saith God to Ezekiel, "as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: For with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness."

The imagination of the covetous is as corrupt as the passion. It gives a false and fictitious character of worth and excellence to wealth, and all that wealth can purchase, by which the understanding—inclined of itself to form erroneous judgments—is dazzled and confounded. The practical faculties of will and power partake of the delusion; and, listening to the voice of falsehood, by which truth has been silenced, or rather commanded not to speak at all, they instantly determine the line of action henceforth to be pursued.

Discontent with present possessions is obviously at the basis of the evil we are considering; a disposition as ungrateful as it is unreasonable, and which, by the just appointment of Heaven, deprives the possessor of the due enjoyment that would otherwise result from the valuable gifts which he only calls his own. He is therefore urged on to the acquisition of fresh stores, forgetful that the same discontent will accompany him, and perhaps continue to increase, through the whole of his pursuits; and that, consequently, his career must be fruitless and interminable.

The innate attractiveness of riches is a powerful cause. The egregious folly of converting the means into an end, of appreciating property solely from the legal title to it or right to command it, and excluding all its uses, strongly tends to rivet the affection to that which is so greatly prized. The heart goes out in search of some perfect, some satisfying good, but on its way is intercepted by the means of good. With these it is more impressed,—because they are present,—than with the end itself; for, though the most deserving of our estimation, it is absent. But as the means are not a perfect end, we are constantly disappointed; and continue adding to their number, in the belief that nothing is wanting to make them such but the augmentation

of them; and this may go on to infinity, for innumerable nothings will never amount to something. The re-iterated presence and impressiveness of riches must, therefore, be extremely dangerous. Hence the caution, "If riches increase, set not thy heart upon them." Hence the doctrine of our Lord, that nothing but the omnipotence of grace can save from the destructive influence of riches. The same grace, indeed, is necessary to save even from the least temptation; but the power of riches is evidently shown to be exceeding great, as if they possessed the infatuating force of enchantment, or could kill us with a look like the basilisk. - "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." That is to say, God alone can save from the murderous power of this trust; for to bring a man to heaven who trusts in riches is no work of omnipotence, because it is a moral impossibility. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Thus we see how riches are themselves, both in prospect and in possession, a powerful cause of the errors and the fascination which determine men to covetousness. Beauty is not more captivating to the eye of youth, than the actual view, or vision of property to the mind of an aged miser, who ought from long experience to have known the vanity and vexatiousness of riches, and who must be conscious that he stands upon the eve of an eternal departure from them. All this shows the prodigious power of riches over some minds. The pleasure which possession gives,—not the use,—seems to intoxicate, or, more properly, to infatuate the covetous. The constant thought of their wealth,—that it lies in yonder tenements and lands, or in the bank, or in the public funds, or in some well-known concealment,—throbs the breast with delight, or is the perpetual under-current of the soul, and swells the tide of all their other enjoyments. Such, indeed, is the mighty magic of this terrible temptation, that the sudden acquisition of a fortune has sometimes been known instantly to inject into a mind naturally generous a sordid love of money; and many who, in moderate circumstances, were liberally inclined, have been converted into misers, and regularly narrowed their views and dispositions just as wealth has been accumulated. These are striking, though perhaps but occasional, instances, and strongly prove the power of riches. A more common case,

however, and one of equal weight in the argument, is this, that men who gradually rise from inferior circumstances to opulence, almost invariably neglect to show a liberality proportioned to their gains. The exceptions to this, even among religious people, are extremely few indeed. "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Sometimes the mind in youth is turned to covetous pursuits without any stirring cause; without any strong temptation arising either from original propensity within, or the peculiar force of objects of attraction from without; but from a resolution formed accidentally. A young man may resolve, from mere humour,—may just take it into his head, as the phrase is, without one spark of benevolent intention,—to save and increase his property, instead of yielding to the opposite temptation,—to extravagance. The advice or example of a respected friend may lead to the same determination. A corresponding line of conduct is adopted and continued, till habit generates and confirms that love of money which constitutes true covetousness. And, perhaps, the countenance and example of worldly-minded parents, and the discovery of the high estimation in which wealth is held by the generality of mankind, contribute in a great degree to fix this vice indelibly in the character. These may seem slight, but they are powerful, causes. Their influence is such, that the young man who has yielded to their sway, in opposition to the natural generosity of youth, and the dictates of an enlightened piety, may be almost looked upon as hopeless, especially if he already possess a fortune sufficient for his station, but through sheer love of pride, or gain, is ardently bent upon multiplying his stores. Every honourable and noble sentiment is now lost in the pursuit of wealth. At first he is deceived by the semblance of virtue in the new character he has assumed; the probability, however, is, that he will go through all the forms of this despicable vice,—love of the world, avarice, cupidity, hoarding, and parsimony,—till at last he settle down into a mean, sordid,

hoary-headed miser: For the principle that now incipiently sways him with a delusive softness, will subsequently wrap the strong cable of its inexorable tyranny around his heart, never to be uncoiled.

We shall name another source of the evil under consideration, —that of satanic influence. This influence is here assumed to be the doctrine of the Scriptures, as this is not the place to prove that point. There is no good proof that there was ever an infernal spirit, or, in all the mythologies, a false god of the name of MAMMON. The personage will do for the poet, as in Milton, but not for the commentators, who ought to keep to truth with all positive strictness. The word means nothing more than "riches." But that Satan himself is the true Mammon,— "the god of this world," whom the covetous adore in his character of Mammon, and who by this means has the power to tempt the heart already touched with the love of money,—may be learned from several texts in the New Testament. And it is somewhat remarkable, that though this infernal tempter is often mentioned as the occasion of sin in general, (for "the whole world lieth in wickedness," that is, under the wicked one,) yet his connexion with particular sins is more directly and frequently adverted to in regard to this crime than any other. To this he tempted Christ himself. So of Judas it is said, "The devil put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him," for thirty pieces of silver. And "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" The gross enchantments and sorceries of Balaam and Barjesus are stated in connexion with their abominable covetousness; and among the counsels given by St. James to different sinners, including those who "ask amiss that they may consume it upon their lusts," this is one, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." What are the precise modes of his access to the mind, and by what mysterious power he darkens the understanding, dazzles the imagination, corrupts the will and affections, and sways, not by force, but suasion, the whole soul to his infernal purposes, it is perhaps neither possible nor necessary to determine. We are chiefly concerned with the fact; and of this there can be no doubt. His power is distinguished from that of "flesh and blood," that is, of all that is merely human; just as the pure agency of the Father is mentioned by our Lord to Peter, in

opposition to the same human nature: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven." This tempter is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." And they are also called his children because they obey and resemble him. Nor is it probable that his power should not be pre-eminently exercised to give birth and effect to a vice so comprehensive, so suited to the corrupt predilections of the heart, so idolatrous, and so pernicious as the crime we are now examining. This cause must, therefore, be not only one of great intrinsical insidiousness and strength; it must also give extraordinary effect to all the rest.

V. ITS CHARACTER AND TENDENCY—OMISSIONS OF DUTY.

THOUGH our subject is, perhaps, too copious for a brief essay, yet we wish to offer something like a sketch of the whole: The intelligence, the attentive thought, and the conscience of the reader will probably supply the rest. The more we know, by scriptural inquiry and reflection, of the real properties and compass of an evil, the more powerful and practical will be the conviction that we ought to shun it. So far the disease becomes, by the grace of God, its own cure. In looking, therefore, at the dangerous sin of covetousness, we ought to view it in all its aspects. The joint impression of the whole may produce a very strong and lasting effect. It may also prevent us from being deceived in regard to some single points which we might otherwise contemplate in too favourable a light; and other points, of the highest importance to be urged in the argument, may be the more forcibly illustrated by the bad alliance in which they manifestly stand with so many other vile and mischievous qualities.

To see the sin of covetousness in all its colours and dimensions, we must farther show it as failing in the most important duties, and as inciting to the practice of certain positive and hateful vices.

The character of covetousness should be examined, we have said, on the defective side. There may be defect in regard to a virtue where there is no actual verging to the opposite vice; for both the virtues and the vices often hold a middle place, as liberality is supposed to be nearly equi-distant from avarice and extravagance; so one may fail of humane duties on the one hand, without running to positive inhumanity and cruelty on the

other. Nor must sins of this negative description be but slightly blamed. In some cases they are crimes of no ordinary magnitude. To refuse the hand of rescue, for instance, to a drowning man, when it might be given with equal ease and safety, would be a species of murder. The deep regret of Archbishop Usher on his death-bed at the remembrance of his sins of omission, must not be thought unfounded because he was a man of uncommon charity, and diligence, and piety. We should rather judge, that his views of the spirituality, the purity, and severity of the law of God, were much more accurate and affecting than those of ordinary Christians; and that, therefore, his emotions corresponded with truth in the subject which distressed him. He had, probably, but very few positive delinquencies to acknowledge. He was led, therefore, to consider the law more especially in the extent of its requirements; and perceiving this divine standard to be lofty, perhaps very far beyond what he could himself express, he shuddered, not from guilt, but from the vision, so to speak, of the nature and extent even of those failures from which God had previously discharged his conscience by a full and free forgiveness. Thus the sensitive mind of one who has been saved from dreadful shipwreck, will long continue to tremble at the horrors from which he has been rescued. And thus, to compare great things with small, the Saviour himself, "who knew no sin," was infinitely agonized at the terrible disclosure of the innumerable crimes for which he was about to suffer on the cross. But our inference from the case of the pious archbishop is this,—that if such was the real character of his omissions, and such their effect upon his mind at death, what shall be said of the many capital and intentional omissions of the covetous and worldly-minded? These must be incomparably more criminal and offensive in the sight of God, and, no doubt, will be visited by some surpassing measure of "the wrath to come."

Covetousness entirely fails in the duty of genuine self-love. This is somewhat remarkable, as self is the grand, nay, the only, object and business of the covetous. Self-love is at once a law of God and of our nature: "No man ever hated his own flesh, but rather cherisheth it." It is, therefore, made the measure of our love to others: "Therefore, all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets." What this self-love is, we may gather

from the way in which we are instructed to promote and secure our own happiness: "Work out your own salvation," briefly comprehends the whole. Were self-love the rule,—self-love as understood by men of the world,—it could not then be said, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink,—thou that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also;" for this would be complying with the rule. And should a covetous man act upon the rule, he would teach all mankind to be as selfish as himself; that is to oppose him, and oppose each other, as their pursuits after gain must necessarily clash together. Nay, he must teach them, at least, by example, that, should he himself be sorely afflicted with sickness and poverty, they ought actually to shut up their bowels of compassion against him, and suffer him to perish. This gross absurdity demonstrates, that the self-love of the covetous is absolutely the reverse of true self-love.

Instead, then, of conforming to the law of God and of nature, justly interpreted in regard to this point, he acts in perfect opposition to it. In this respect he deliberately refuses to comply with the will of the Almighty Lawgiver, and contravenes one of the noblest plans of the Divine benevolence, which is to make man happy, not from his private personal enjoyment, but but from the reflected felicity of myriads beside himself; true self-love expanding in a stream as wide as the universe, and flowing back into the fountain whence it issued. This is happiness upon a scale of grandeur worthy of the ever-blessed God; but of this the sons of selfishness know nothing. Their language is, "Give! Give!" forgetful that Omnipotence has decreed that this demand cannot be granted, in any genuine sense, unless they first exclaim with cordial sentiments, "Take! Take!" They live only for themselves, and yet in direct opposition to themselves: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

How covetousness departs from due attention to the eternal interests of the man whom it enslaves, is evinced by his frequent abridgment, or entire neglect, of the means appointed for their advancement and security. This alone shows that the vice is one which tells with terrible effect upon the soul. What time, and thought, and care, utterly beyond the demands of necessity, are completely absorbed in covetousness, all of which might be

occupied with infinite advantage in serious studies, in active usefulness, or in the public and private exercises of devotion, even on the ordinary days of the week! But all this advantage selfishness, with incalculable folly and inconsistency, wipes out as with a sponge: Selfishness! the eternal confounder of its own designs, guilty, not of simple suicide, but of the shocking monstrosity of becoming its own executioner, by the aggravated misery of the means which it employs for self-destruction.

But how palpable, how criminal, how detestable, does covetousness appear in its deliberate abandonment of social duties! In these the slave of riches is proverbially deficient. There is, indeed, a class of social observances to which, on his own account, he finds it very convenient to attend; such as those of justice, or, at least, of apparent justice; some of the modes and tempers of intercourse required by the classes of society with whom he associates; and the particular attentions to the wants of relatives and friends which decency will sometimes irresistibly demand. But even these, when some particular temptation of interest arises, he will often find some Jesuitical pretence to disregard. There may, indeed, be real covetousness where these are not neglected. It will cater for its own, but for no living soul besides. Even natural affection may mingle with this foul stream, and partake of its contamination. Then, if he is well, and his family are well, all the world is well, for any thing he cares; though even here, in many instances, his anxiety for others is merely pretensional, as is proved by the grasp with which he holds his treasure from the necessary uses of his family;—a grasp which death alone can loosen.

The lover of money will occasionally become the lover of something else, provided it be something connected with self; for self may appear at one time in love of gain; at other times, in pride, in mere humour, nay, in vaunting deeds of charity,—as we learn from St. Paul, that alms may possibly be given, not as a matter of bounty, but of covetousness; that is, given reluctantly, or for show, or with some view to receive a larger quantity in some other way. Yes, "Self! self!" is the unchangeable watch-word of this dear, this all-important personage; the music which he sings in cordial whispers to his own ear on commercial walks, or loves to hear echoed in his solitudes, as infinitely sweeter than "the wood-notes wild" of groves; the motto of a crest which bears his own picture, encircled by a zodiac, as if

the universe had been created solely for his use. But to the softenings of a tender pity he is an absolute stranger. The groans of the widow and her weeping orphans, of the houseless and forsaken, of the naked and the famishing, no more affect him than the shrieks of the shipwrecked melt the rocks which dash their vessel into shivers. This may not be the exact resemblance of every individual son of avarice; but it is the real character and tendency of the system,—of the vice which he permits to reign predominant, and which, but for certain modifying checks, would show itself in the full perfection of a cruel marble-heartedness. How criminal in the sight of God, how detestable in the sight of man, and how shameful to himself, when seen by the eye of his own skulking reflection, must be the several sins of omission included in this obstinate and apathetic disregard to the happiness of others!

With regard to the more exuberant manifestations of a noble disposition, such as benevolence and beneficence, liberality and generosity, which have for their object, (apart from the relief of misery,) the adding to the happiness of those who are already somewhat happy, the lifting up of virtuous and holy men to situations and circumstances more suited to their worth, and the support of public institutions which boldly bear upon the farther improvement of society in its great masses and public interests, civil and religious;—all this is immeasurably distant from his heart and habits, unless, as we have hinted, his selfishness should start for the moment from the love of money to the love of popularity, and shine out in a large printed subscription to be circulated through the land.

In hospitality the covetous of civilized and Christian kingdoms are much more deficient than those of savage countries. It is true, the necessity for this subordinate virtue is not now so peculiarly urgent in this improved age of the world. Still it stands enjoined in the evangelical law; still there is the passing stranger, and the man of private worth and talent, but of obscure and constricted circumstances, both of whom a noble Christian kindness would gladly solace and encourage, were it only for the sake of acquiring more of knowledge and of virtue by the practice; and still the poor we have always with us, whom our Lord appears to recommend we should invite to our feasts, and for this very reason,—that they cannot return the invitation. How sparing many wealthy persons are, as to the number and

value of such entertainments, on the plea, that they never loved company, or dislike extravagance and show, or some other pleas equally irrelevant; what are the actual reasons which lead the covetous to an occasional appearance of an hospitable spirit; and how widely those reasons differ from the principles of a genuine Christian, noble, disinterested hospitality, need not here be shown by any lengthened observations.

In true, Christian, honourable friendship, the devotee of covetousness is altogether wanting. The truth is, beneath the blasting influence of this vice, when allowed to exercise its full power, his moral nature, or perhaps the Divine life itself in the soul, is seriously shaken, if not entirely destroyed; its principles are enervated, the heart is hardened, and the sweetest fountains of humanity and of social feeling are shut up or congealed. He is absolutely incapable of fine and faithful friendship; we had almost said, that if he would, he could not be the generous and uniform friend of the best man upon earth. Not that his failures here would be confined to affairs respecting property, though such affairs would most likely bring his hollowness to light; but in other matters, self-love—still the great and leading attribute of his character—would perpetually operate. At first, no man can be more liberal in his professions, or prompt and profuse in his attentions to your person and your family. Others, far more cautious, yet more honest, seem cold and reserved, compared with this most devoted patron and promoter of your happiness. But some trivial matter, probably of interest or humour, or some prejudice, received without examination, interferes; and, instead of frankly expounding it, he slinks off by degrees,—for selfishness is cowardly at heart,—and leaves you, not to the British privilege of self-defence, but to the task of conjecturing what can have brought the huge calamity upon you of losing so dear, so valuable a friend. This departure from friendship, we allow, may be found in some who are by no means chargeable with covetousness; as, on the other hand, the covetous are not always entirely devoid of honest friendship. We only say, as already stated, in regard to certain other effects, that this is the peculiar tendency and character of the vice. Self-love is, in one sense, at the basis of all sin; yet the same specific fruit which it produces where there is no covetousness, may be seen to grow more rankly on the stem in which the whole power of the poison-plant seems eminently concen-

trated. There may also be the remains of covetousness, as well as of other sins, in the hearts of genuine Christians, who struggle to oppose the evil, and prevent its interfering, either capitally or constantly, with the honest principles on which their character is mainly founded. Yet even such hearts are not the safest depositories of your confidence and special affection. But among professors of religion,—and flaming professors too,—we are painfully constrained to acknowledge, there are many instances of decided and habitual covetousness. With regard to such it may be boldly affirmed, that they are as unsusceptible of an honest, generous, disinterested friendship, as they are of all the other tender and endearing charities of life; and if we might presume to drop a word of admonition to the reader, we would say, "Never trust to the friendship of a man who is covetous, and, at the same time, talks a great deal about the depths of religion. Pity him, warn him, counsel him, and honourably mould him to some useful purpose if you can; but never take him to your bosom as your dearest companion, nor garner up in him the choicest secrets of your soul: He will as certainly deceive you, as the serpent cozened Eve." It happens frequently, however, that persons given to covetousness form no friendships at all. The love of money makes them suspicious, and in other respects obtunds their inclination for social intimacy. This of itself would lead us to conclude, before the fact, that they would often start from the obligations of an alliance which, they would naturally judge, made unreasonable demands upon them; and, therefore, we may not frequently perceive such flagrant violations of friendship committed by them as would otherwise occur.

But this deficiency in regard to friendship is not the worst of their sins of omission. The last we shall name in regard to social duties is one of infinitely greater consequence,—their cruel heartlessness respecting the salvation of mankind by the support and propagation of the Gospel. Of this, nothing can be said to the infidel and the profligate; for where there is no Divine life in the soul there can be no Divine charity; and so far, there is a miserable consistency in their refusal to encourage Christian instruction. But the moment any man admits the truth of Christianity, he is bound to look upon the duty of extending it as one of incalculable weight and obligation; and from whatever cause he may disregard this duty,—whether from inattention, or extravagance, or parsimony,—his guilt is of no ordinary kind,

because it bears some proportion to the infinity of the good for the accomplishment of which he makes no due attempts. Rich professors of religion are in this respect most culpable. They give, if they give at all, "of their abundance;" that is, as the version ought to be, of their *superfluity*. Suppose they gave as the poor give, "of their penury;" that is, of what is *necessary*, and practised self-denial with a view to give, what immense good would be effected, and good of the highest order, which, in the present state of giving, cannot be achieved! Nay, if they would largely reduce their hoardings, and practise no other self-denial, the revenues for usefulness, to be laid at the feet of Him who is the Divine Head of the church, would be of inconceivable importance to the world. One would think the mention of the subject would alone be sufficient to strike the mind with its matchless magnificence, and to call forth the Christian sympathies, and intercessions, and liberal communications of every man possessed of thought, and heart, and the power of doing good. But no grandeur connected with such considerations, no power of minute and graphical illustrations of this subject: no force of argument, or scriptural authority, employed to produce conscientious impressions, it would seem, can touch the callous nature of a covetous and worldly-minded man. He does not give the subject the serious and intense study which even its apparent importance obviously demands, and, so far, he cannot feel. Or if he feel, he stifles the incipient emotion, and falls back upon his natural abhorrence of expense; or should he act, it is but reluctantly and scantily, and not at all proportioned either to his means or the merits of the cause. But who can tell how criminal is this omission? Let the value of the soul, the shrieks of the damned, the shouts of the redeemed, and the import of that dreadful word, ETERNITY, pronounce upon this guiltiness!

Of those omissions which more immediately regard the Divine Being, one is, a direct, deliberate, conscious, rebellious, and continued violation of his will upon this subject; his prohibitory will, expressed in the strongest language, and with the most indignant sanctions, in almost every book of Scripture. No crime, indeed, appears to be more absolutely prohibited, or more fearfully denounced, than that of covetousness; and that men should regularly sit under the preaching of the Gospel, by which the great Lord of all property commands his stewards to give

him of his own, or condescends to pray and to entreat that they would do so, and yet should positively refuse, or but grudgingly and partially obey, must appear to be an omission of no common criminality.

In this class of omissions ought to be inserted the refusal to advance the interests of his kingdom, in reference to which his chief honour is concerned. But if this can only be done, both at home and abroad, by measures which involve expense, the covetous professor demurs or shrinks at once. God is infinitely worthy of all honour. He imperatively demands it. It was the grand, the last end for which he made the world, and includes in itself all other noble purposes. The talents, the property, the opportunities, which we possess to advance it, are all of his providing; and for this purpose he has the sole right to the full stretch of their universal and constant application. Covetousness is not, indeed, the only sin chargeable with great omissions of duty in this respect; still, because the covetous are not unfrequently possessed of ample property, which they refuse, from selfishness, to employ in the duty, preferring the miserable means to the infinite end, their criminality must be peculiarly great. It must be impossible, indeed, to form any proportionate conception of the intrinsic guilt, to say nothing of the folly, of this capital omission. Though negative, it seems to have something of infinity connected with it, owing to the boundless importance of this great final cause of all things. If but contrasted with the character of the opposite conduct, its culpability is striking: The supreme, the burning ardour of the pious Brainerd, for example, to promote the glory of his Redeemer in the prosecution of his labours among the American Indians, was, if we may so express it, his great and master passion; sometimes so powerful as to occasion fainting, and, finally, by its effects, consuming life itself. Yet to this prime motive to all duty, the money-lover seems utterly insensible; though in the meanwhile, perhaps, he will confess that he owes his life and breath, and all things,—even the blood of Christ, and the proffer of eternal life,—to the God who righteously demands this honour from him. Rather than part with his wretched pelf, the very purpose for which the universe was made must, as far as his individual agency is concerned, be absolutely frustrated. One can hardly think of any thing which could show the sin of covetousness in a more hateful and abominable light. Instead of concurring with

his Maker in the magnificent design which has eternally engaged the attention of the Infinite Mind, and which of all possible designs is the dearest to the Godhead; he differs altogether from this revealed intention of unfathomable wisdom; forms a petty, opposite, and selfish end of his own, and pursues it by determined and continued efforts to thwart, in this respect, the operations of Omnipotence.

In concluding our brief notice of omissions, we must refer to the cardinal graces of faith, hope, and charity. How these are violated by this vice, will be obvious on the very mention of the subject. We speak not here, indeed, of justifying faith, though the crime in question might be shown to stand at perfect variance with the character and tendency of such a faith; but we would simply ask, whether covetousness can anywise agree with that general trust in the faithfulness and providence of God, respecting the supply of our temporal necessities, which results from justifying faith, and which, even in poverty, confesses with adoring gratitude the riches of his goodness, nay, of his loving-kindness! This vice is a perpetual implication and reproach both of the truth and liberality of God. As to hope, its object is always real or apparent good. What revelation demonstrates to be infinitely worthy of our hopes, the man who loves the world entirely undervalues. Heaven has no charms for him, compared with those of the perishable property in which his happiness is quite bound up. Were heaven assimilated to this world, and could become the object of a carnal appreciation, he might love it with the same selfish attachment with which he loves earthly objects, and with which the wicked at the last day will desire it, to escape damnation; but hope—as a grace compounded of an influence of the Divine Spirit of love to God, and holiness, and heaven for the sake of God—is a perfect stranger to his heart, at least so far as this insidious vice has taken the occupation of it. And he who has ever felt that most pure and sublime of all the passions, love to God, must be convinced from his own experience how utterly incompatible it is with the polluting love of this world. But here the apostle John is most express: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Thus the great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," is left unheeded by the covetous; and the rightful Proprietor of all things is unjustly deprived of that which he prizes above every other offering which the world could

present. How, in the meanwhile, love in its character of social charity is disregarded, we have noticed in a foregoing part of this essay. Is it possible that men of this description can live the spiritual, the holy, the heavenly-minded life of which the essential principles are faith, hope, and charity?

VI. POSITIVE CRIMES TO WHICH IT LEADS.

But the evils of this vice lie not wholly in disobedient and obstinate inaction. They are also found in stirring crimes; crimes, too, some of which are gross violations of the laws and amenities of civil society, and all of them in perfect opposition to the principles and temper of the Divine life of Christians.

This great sin is not by metaphor, but in the express and literal sense, termed "idolatry;" a crime against which Almighty God has denounced his displeasure with extraordinary frequency and indignation. There are some, indeed, "whose god is their belly;" but even these are not so conspicuously marked out as objects of Divine vengeance; nor is this sensual species of the crime so frequently and palpably referred to by the inspired writers. The difference between the idolatry of the covetous, and that of false worshippers in Heathen lands, is rather circumstantial than essential; for, where is the difference between bowing down to gold in the shape of an image, and giving the best affections to it in the form of the royal coin, or as converted into property of any other kind? Is not the alienation of the heart from God, and the rivalry of his just and supreme dominion over it, the same in both cases? Does not the covetous dread the loss of his gold, as much as the devotee fears to incur the anger of his god? Is not his confidence in riches greater than his "trust in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength;" convinced, and acting on the conviction, that his life consists in the abundance of the things which he possesses? What is idolatry, if this be not? There is this difference, indeed,—that the poor Heathen is a rude untutored savage, and the avaricious worshipper of gold in Christian countries is a man of cultivated habits, and enlightened, at least, by the speculative knowledge of the Christian religion. Our Lord, in illustrating this species of idolatry, with great beauty personifies riches by MAMMON. It ought to be observed, that nothing more emphatically stamps the character of any man with ingratitude to God than this same abominable worship of the creature. The very bounty of the

Divine hand, so liberally bestowed, with the view of leading the receiver to the Giver, is employed to dethrone him from the affections of the heart, and is erected in his place as the god of supreme and devoted homage.

Avarice not unfrequently produces, and at least always tends to produce, scandalous acts of injustice. Selfishness, which is its great under-current, will take care, if possible, to avoid the legal punishment which might consequently follow; but even the fear of punishment—for the fear of God and of disgrace is out of question with a sordid miser—cannot overcome his pressing thirst for money, and he runs the risk of consequences. Where such acts are not committed, there is still great injustice in withholding from God what he demands; and injustice of a certain kind must mingle with the apathy of him who, beholding his brother in distress, yet refuses to give him from his own abundance the necessary comfort,—for this he *ought* to do. What is read, "Do not your alms," some read, "Do not your *righteousness*, before men;" because the Syriac words which signify "righteousness," or "alms," both come from the Hebrew word *to be just*. And of Joseph it is said that, "being a just man," that is, a *merciful* man, he was "not willing to make Mary a public example," but "was minded to put her away privily." Nay, the miser is absolutely unjust to himself, withholding that which is due to his own dependent nature, to his character and happiness.

Akin to this injustice is the practice of lying for purposes of gain. To say nothing of direct and wilful falsehoods, the vast variety of obtrusive and evasive simulation practised in affairs of trade and commerce, even by multitudes who rank themselves as men of honourable character, is truly astonishing. The language in which goods are described is often shamefully inflated, and widely removed from the character of a correct and conscientious statement; while by many nameless and deceptive circumstances, things are made to appear what in reality they are not, though not a single word perhaps is spoken which could be fairly termed "a direct falsehood;" and all with the pitiful intention of securing some despicable trifles loftily entitled "profit."

We have already mentioned pride as a twin stem with covetousness upon the great trunk of selfishness. But pride may be viewed as greatly heightened by the possession of riches in the man whose heart is fixed upon them from an undue estimation of

them, for he who lives a life of faith is not thus affected by his wealth. Nothing has been more obvious in all ages, than the truth that "riches make men proud:" It is equally the observation of the philosopher and of the peasant. Hence the high mutual resentments of the rich; and hence the trepidation with which they are frequently approached by the poor. The angry, haughty manner in which a man who has acquired property often speaks to his servants, and to his inferiors in general, as well as his fawning on those who are his equals or superiors in wealth, sufficiently evince and illustrate the correctness of the observation. It is also confirmed by the fact, that these proud characteristics are not uncommonly seen for the first time in a man upon his sudden elevation to property, and afterwards disappear should he be reduced to his original level. In connexion with this pride, there is often a merciless unkindness and cruelty to others. For pride, and anger, and especially the love of money, all concur to harden the heart against the sufferings of the necessitous. Hence the remark of Solomon: "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." "The poor useth entreaties, but the rich answereth roughly."

Such are the more palpable and leading features of this great and fearful, but insidious, evil. The more minute shades and fillings-up of the odious portrait would require more space in the canvass, and the hand of a master. But we must now turn our best and brief attention to the remedy.

VII. THE COVETOUS CONVICTED.

It must be manifest to all who have paid the least attention to this subject, that no true and perfect amendment can take place, until the guilty person be convicted of the crime; and that conviction of the sin we have been considering cannot be completely, if at all, effected but with extreme difficulty, such as probably does not attach to any other case of crime. A covetous man is not much disposed even to look at this unpleasant subject in an abstract and speculative light. He is less inclined to consider it with a view to self-examination, and to admit the possibility of his guilt. Still less is he willing to yield to the arguments by which the charge against him is supported. And, least of all, should he be silent from the force of truth, will he come to the sincere and firm purpose of abandoning his sin.

It may be of use in self-examination to inquire, "Who are

most liable to fall into the sin of covetousness? and to which of the several species of this crime do we belong?"

Here, as in most other instances of character, the subject, though marked by a general denomination, seems naturally to fall into numerous varieties. This has already been referred to; but is particularly necessary to be kept in mind, if we would carefully avoid delusion in a course of self-inquiry. For he who is covetous in one of the least objectionable senses of the word, may, because he is not chargeable with the higher species of the crime, vainly conclude that he is not covetous at all. There is the dishonest miser, who never hesitates, if he can only avoid detection, to gain property by every unrighteous and dishonourable means within his reach. There is the just and equitable worldling, who makes no particular profession of religion, but who, while he renders "to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," supremely loves his money, and never makes the least pretension to render "to God the things which are God's." There is the miser, properly so called, who makes himself wretched by the extreme cares and privations connected with his love of gain. And there is, also, the bold professor of the Christian faith, who, equally disclaiming infidelity and immorality, declares his admiration of all holiness, and seems attentive to almost every duty of religion—except that of parting with a reasonable share of his property for pious and benevolent designs. He is no miser, nor does he refuse altogether to assist in promoting such good purposes. Still he loves money for its own sake, hoards it, is proud of it, indulges in the enjoyments which it procures, and is incessant in his anxious endeavours to increase it.

If in the next place it be asked, "Who are most liable to fall into this vice?" we may reply, that, in a large but very unusual sense of the term, mankind in general are covetous, and cleave unduly to the creature, and by this means incur some stain of idolatry. But, both in the scriptural and popular usage of the word, it applies emphatically to certain classes who are guilty in the manner we have attempted to describe. We are all, however, in some danger of yielding to the love of the world in the sense of proper covetousness. Yet some, from character and circumstances, are more particularly inclined to this vice. The distressing cares and anxieties of life, whether connected with absolute poverty, or with the desire to preserve appearances in respectable society where the means are not at all sufficient, tend

to produce an extravagant valuation of money as the instrument of securing comfort and enjoyment. Should this be followed by abundance, the effect will probably be that love of it which God condemns; though sometimes the opposite excess is the consequence. Hence commerce is rather liberalizing, because of the continued stream of money flowing through the hands of the merchant, while agriculture, from the contrary cause, has quite another tendency. There is a delusion here, indeed; for the same farmer who could not be prevailed upon to part with money to relieve the poor, would, notwithstanding, show himself hospitable probably in a high degree,—at greater real expense than was asked in the way of money. Those who are brought up in parsimonious and money-loving habits, by worldly-minded parents who have spared no pains to exemplify and inculcate such a disposition, too often fall into the snare of a thorough and confirmed covetousness. Yet here again quite another consequence ensues, when sometimes the son will spend in great excesses what the father has hoarded and accumulated with much care and anxiety. It might seem that persons of weak capacity would be easily betrayed into this sin; as, all things considered, scarcely any vice can be conceived more absurd and irrational than that of covetousness. There is truth in this. But the evil being as congenial to the moral corruption of our nature, as it is opposed to the enlightened dictates of cultivated intellect, the instances of minds great in some respects, but weak in this, are by no means few in number. The celebrated Duke of Marlborough, all hero as he was, would walk the streets of London in a heavy rain rather than expend a single six-pence on a coach. But the aged, above every other class, are in danger of this pernicious habit. Covetousness comes not in bursts and paroxysms, like anger; but is rather a continual fit, allowing no lucid interval for reflection, but ever pressing on the mind with a slow and secret energy which increases its momentum with the advance of existence. Time and business, which tend to chill the passion of excessive love, for instance, only serve to strengthen and to rivet this infatuating propensity. Several reasons might be given for this peculiar proclivity of age, and which, perhaps, deserve mention, that we may guard against the danger, or may adopt the corresponding measures necessary to our extrication. One cause is this, that, according to a benevolent law of nature, we are instinctively inclined to hold

with firmer grasp that which, while we value it, we know we are in danger speedily of losing. The aged also know by long experience how difficult it is to gain, and how easy it is to lose, the property on which they have set their affections. These laws, though good in themselves, are here morally perverted, in obedience to selfishness. And where piety has little or no control, and where the age both of youthful sins and those of manhood has passed away, the native and accumulated corruption of nature must break out in some fresh channel, and will strive to take the entire and exclusive occupation of the heart.

But how shall the covetous, of every class, be led to self-detection? "With men it is impossible," but not with God: "For with God all things are possible." Without his omnipotence all arguments must fail. Here the whole bias of the mind is against conviction, fortified in the strong citadel of an infatuated and determined heart, in which the judgment and the conscience are taken prisoners, and blinded by the dungeon-darkness of their enslaved condition. The evil lies not in the act itself, which is often intrinsically good, but in the motive and the measure of it; hence the insidious bias looks at the act and at that alone. The evil borders and trenches upon duty; nay, boldly claims to be called by that holy designation, as if it were its own legitimate and baptismal name. As an old writer says, "It grows between the stones of the temple, and among the saints themselves; and, mingling with all goodness, hypocritically assumes its character; and not only attempts to repel the charge of vice, but impudently lauds itself as virtue, nay, religion, and obedience to the prudential precepts of the Gospel, which commands us to provide for ourselves and families."

Yet, surely, covetousness with all its subtlety may be detected; for St. Paul commands that the person guilty of the crime should be excommunicated. "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." And this he calls judging them.

We would respectfully and affectionately entreat the reader, at least to suppose himself to be the object of some probable suspicion of this sin; and to inquire impartially into the obvious

and certain characteristics of this crime; whether they be in whole or in part the signs which mark his conduct? We would appeal to him, and say, Do you, when this self-scrutiny is proposed, fly directly in the face of it, and scorn the very idea that you are guilty in this respect? Have you no suspicion of yourself? Are you totally disinclined to look into your own heart, to review your own life, and to judge your own state, at least in the closet of your solitude, and in the presence of the Almighty; imploring him to shed the light of his truth upon the subject of covetousness, and to "cleanse you from secret faults," confessing, that this may possibly be one? and with this special view, humbly praying, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" If you are offended, and revolt from such reflections, the fair presumption is, that you are not quite innocent. Let conscience say, whether you are not more anxious and laborious to obtain earthly treasures than to enjoy the "true riches" of God's undoubted favour, the image of his holiness engraven on your heart, and the ultimate possession of his kingdom and glory? Are you not in actual possession of more ample means than are at all necessary (we will not say to your comfort, but) to the reasonable enjoyment of the luxury of a respectable condition? perhaps more than twice as ample as you once possessed when many reminiscences will attest that you were happier then than you are now? Have you not stores which you have no design to use, and which, indeed, you could not in your own person properly exhaust? spacious rooms which you cannot occupy, numerous garments which you cannot wear, costly vessels which you never show, and which perhaps you would be sorry to exhibit in connexion with an expensive banquet? But you have them. They are yours. Yes, they belong to you, and to no one else. Here is the zest of all riches, whether used or useless. It is this that makes the heart to glow with delight. They are here, and there, and yonder; and the whole heaven of the matter is, you can say, "They are mine." If, in the midst of all these riches, you are not feelingly and practically alive to the miserable condition of your brethren of mankind, who in many instances are perishing in body and soul for lack of food and knowledge, will you still persist in saying you are not covetous? Christianity apart, an Heathen

moralist would exclaim, "Wretch, why should *thousands* starve while you have *thousands?*" Is this a state of things to be endured; much less to be maintained and defended, as it often is, by the selfish sophistry of rich men? Does it not demonstrate covetousness in any man to whom it applies?

Again: Suppose you are not possessed of wealth, are you among those of whom the apostle speaks where he says, "They that *will be* rich fall into temptation and a snare?" Are you not more painfully touched with a sense of your poverty, as perhaps at heart you deem it, (though God "has given you all things that pertain unto life and godliness,") than with the sense of your guilt, as rebellious in his sight? And are you not more rejoiced at your gains than your graces? Ask your conscience, whether you do not desire and value riches for their own sake, and for the earthly enjoyments they procure, than because they are helps to duty and usefulness, in the advancement of His glory who bestows them? Do you not spend more time and care upon the acquisition of them, than religion, which claims your first attention, will admit? insomuch that you can scarcely give your Maker a single free-will offering of public service on the week-days; and even claim some portion of the sabbath itself for your own temporal advantage. And, while mingling with those who worship God, are you not also one of those of whom he says to Ezekiel?—"They sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness; saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?" Are you not invariably dejected and distressed at the loss of property, but commonly at perfect ease and quiet, if not merry, when you prosper in the world, though you know you have good reason to conclude that your soul is neither sanctified nor pardoned? Has not the love of money, more than necessity and a sense of right, mingled with your suits at law? Have not your anxieties to provide what you call "fortunes" for your children far, very far, exceeded the interest you have taken to save their souls from hell, and secure them "grace and glory?" Are you not more penetrating and acute, as well as more alive and sensitive, in reference to worldly gain, than in

regard to the plan and prospects of salvation? For the heart is remotely the source of our judgments and perceptions, because it impels the understanding to the utmost in the service of what the affections love. This inquiry, therefore, is a sure and certain test of a worldly disposition:—Suppose you were required to part with all you possess, or with your best religious privileges; how would you determine? Demas could bear persecution with St. Paul, but he could not suffer want with him. When put to the choice, he forsook the apostle, "having loved this present world." He loved it with the love which signifies content, and rest, and full delight and satisfaction in the object preferred. He cleaved to the world as the heart of God to Christ; for the same expressive word is used in both cases. In the case we have supposed, would not your heart leap towards the property, as the affection of the mother before Solomon fled to her infant in the painful fear of losing it? If you are more inclined to dwell on pleas for what you call "frugality," than to discover and urge the reasons for a bountiful and charitable disposition; and if you love the element, the company, the conversation, and pursuits, which favour hoarding and increasing riches, rather than such things as have quite another tendency, the proof of your covetousness is undeniable. When, instead of feeling sorrow for past acts of obsequiousness in the worship of Mammon, and, after having long listened to sermons, and counsels, and arguments in opposition to this abominable idolatry, the devotee still renews his homage at this infernal shrine, the evidence of his sin in this respect may be said to be complete. Nay, when the patient is really worse for the only proper medicine suited to his case, the disease may be deemed almost beyond a cure. These are a few, at least, of the distinctive marks by which a covetous disposition may be unquestionably ascertained; and which, as far as applicable, the offending party must bring home to himself before a single remedy can be supposed to take effect.

Still he clings to the sin which doth so easily beset him, with incredible tenacity; and, repelling the force of these arrows of conviction, boldly affirms, that, in regard to this disgraceful charge, whatever may be said of others, *he* is not a guilty man. If you propose the same tests to the others, if guilty, they equally disclaim the crime. Thus it might seem, that not a man on earth will confess himself chargeable with a vice so ignominious; and all the powerful reasonings of Scripture and of

moral writers on this subject would, of course, be totally without foundation.

Is necessity your plea? "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have." "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Such are the counsels and example of a matchless and authoritative judge of this whole question. It is an old and obvious remark, that he who is not content in his present state would be content in none. If, when the reasonable demands of nature and of station in society are fulfilled, there is still no satisfaction, the plea of necessity, we may suspect, would continue to be urged, though innumerable thousands flowed to fill the craving gulf of the covetous disposition. At all events, it may be asked, "What conceivable necessity can there be for loving and adoring riches, and perverting them from their right end?" But in many instances this plea of necessity is not honestly advanced. Provision for a family, as it is called, with seeming virtue, is often kept from the family until the dying wretch can keep it to himself no longer. Poor relations he has frequently named, not from sympathy, but as a reason of his worldly cares; and poorly indeed has he relieved them! Or where is the necessity that your children should begin the world with such mighty advantages above what you yourself possessed before your successful industry raised you to wealth? Money may possibly, by the help of extraordinary grace and watchfulness, be serviceable to holiness; and here the risk is great, as if the party undertook, with a small detachment of men, to effect and enter a breach in the wall of a strongly-fortified city. But where is the necessity of riches to virtue? Rewards, at last, will not be given according to the several stations now allotted to mankind, but according to the manner in which they have been occupied. To sweep the public paths, or lift a straw from the ground, in obedience to the will of God, is a more sublime action, and will be infinitely more rewarded at the last day, than the ransom of a nation without regard to his command and glory.

Nor will your partial innocence and formal and punctual attention to religious duties be any vindication of your covetousness. You may use none but lawful means to increase your stores; you may not covet "any thing that is thy neighbour's;" you may thank God for your possessions, as a wicked farmer may

thank God for a shower of rain to fructify his parched fields; you may talk of heaven and heavenly things, and fast, and pray, and give a little sometimes for benevolent purposes, and intend to leave much more for such purposes when you come to die; you may speak strong things against covetousness in the abstract, and against individuals whom you presume to be covetous; you may even preach with great vehemence, and argument, and eloquence, in opposition to this vice; and yet you may all the while set your heart upon the world, "mind earthly things," and, consequently, live in continual exposure to eternal damnation.

In the hope, however, that, by a Divine blessing, conviction may result from all that we have said, considered as a whole; we would venture, with much deference and affection, to recommend the following remedies:—

VIII. STATES OF MIND ESSENTIAL TO THE REMEDY.

Among the states of mind essential to the recovery of a sinner who has been guilty of this abominable vice, that of sincere and deep repentance is the first in order. This, indeed, is absolutely requisite in all cases of transgression; but more especially with regard to avarice, not only because of its peculiar heinousness and turpitude, but also on account of the extreme tenacity with which it grasps the heart; for the design of repentance is not to make atonement for the sin, but, in some degree, to loosen it from the mind by the grace of which it is the medium, as a preparation for pardon, and a more complete recovery from its bondage and defilement. And here the difficulty is increased by the meanness and shamefulness of this base and sordid vice. It is a fearful demand on human pride, to require the acknowledgment of a sin so truly despicable. Still, genuine contrition must ensue, and even public confession where the crime has been public, and restitution where avarice has trenched upon justice. Yes, could honest Latimer again look from his grave upon the culprit, he would make the region ring with his ancient sentence, "Restitution, or damnation!" The grace of God, however, can break the chain of this infernal enchantment; and repentance is not merely commanded, but strongly exemplified, in connexion with this crime. "There was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord." The capital instance of this "wickedness," recorded at

length, is his covetousness; the prophet Elijah was, therefore, divinely commissioned to denounce the dreadful judgments impending over both himself and his house: "And it came to pass, that when Ahab heard these words, he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days." How condescending, how encouraging, as well as truly sublime, is the following declaration, spoken expressly with regard to covetousness!—"Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is HOLY, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him." Upon the first touch of conviction, let the covetous offender cherish the sweet and humbling influence, and invoke his gracious Redeemer for the farther grace of his good Spirit, to bring his penitence to full effect. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

The grand and super-human principle of a Divine life in the soul should be sedulously cultivated and preserved in health and vigour. If this be neglected, if this principle be suffered to sicken and expire, the mere humanity which may remain, however strengthened and elevated by intellectual and moral culture, and however aided by the authority of reason, would be more than overmatched by this terrible temptation. Or, if its force should be broken, it would only be in consequence of the great power of some other sin, which, for the time being, might pluck Mammon from his throne and occupy his place. It was thus that pride, for instance, was a governing principle and cause of the boasted virtues of the ancients. The honourable conduct

of Alexander towards the daughter of Darius is much celebrated; but it was infinitely above him to exclaim, with a Hebrew saint, "Shall I do this thing, and sin against God?" And even this is not a mere moral consideration, but includes a portion of Divine strength infused to give it energy; it includes regeneration, "a new creature," or, literally, "a new creation." This is clear, in regard to covetousness, from the words of St. John: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" One would have expected the apostle rather to say, "How dwelleth the love of *man* in him?" And the love of God, whatever be the sense affixed to it, must imply a Divine principle, as the cause of our cordial charity: "I will send," says St. Paul, "to bring your liberality," that is, your grace, τὴν χάριν ὑμῶν, or gift, which is the effect of grace, "to Jerusalem." And on a parallel occasion he asserts the same doctrine: "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." Nay, some excellent theologians are of opinion, that all the natural virtues of unregenerate men are the effect of the Holy Spirit in them, as a Spirit of restraint and of illumination. If so, how much more necessary is it, to the production of the essential graces and accepted actions of a Christian, that the same Divine Agent should dwell in us as a Spirit of grace and of sanctification? Therefore, let the penitent, who begins to loathe his covetousness, turn his fixed and firm attention to this important point; for, should God, in his sovereignty, by mere power, restrain his covetousness, or turn this stream of corruption into some other channel, such as that of pride, or ambition, still, this would by no means be an evangelical cure of covetousness,—would not profit him in regard to his salvation, however it might subserve some other purpose of Divine Providence.

Another state of mind effectual for conquering this powerful besetment, is that of a scriptural assurance of our state in Christ. In all such contests with our spiritual adversaries, doubt, on so important a question, is debilitating; certainty is, in no small degree, encouraging and animating. Our first Reformers, and succeeding Non-conformists urged this, as a doctrine of great moment, in their controversies with the Romanists, and as a

privilege of unspeakable advantage in the Divine life; a privilege which their writings still inculcate may be obtained by faith in the promises of pardon, adoption, and spiritual consolation. Whoever is inattentive to this runs the risk of being powerfully tempted to seek consolation of a very different kind; proper attention to it will render strong temptation powerless. Hence the pious Baxter writes: "Certainly assurance is a most desirable thing; it kindleth in us the love of God; it maketh duty sweet; it maketh sufferings easy, and death less terrible, and heaven more desired, and, consequently, cureth an earthly mind, and leadeth man to a heavenly conversation, and putteth life into all his endeavours: Whereas a man that is still utterly in doubt of his state of salvation, and right to life, will be loath to die, and, therefore, love this present world, and have less thankful and loving thoughts of God and his Redeemer, and so all sin will have advantage, and holiness a great impediment." To the same effect the ever-memorable John Hales, of Eton, writes: "It is a famous speech of Martin Luther, though hyperbolical, that 'should a man indeed believe himself to be a son and heir of God, he could not fail in a very short time to be swallowed and die of excessive joy.' And certainly," continues Hales, "either our not believing or not rightly valuing the things of God, or, howsoever, not knowing them, is the cause of this our languishing, and impatient longing after earthly things." The joy of the Lord is the strength of his people.

Humility is another frame and disposition of the mind, which, if cultivated and confirmed, could not fail to sap and destroy the very foundation of covetousness. We have said, This vice produces pride. The converse of the proposition is equally correct: Pride engenders covetousness. On the contrary, the man who is humble is also kind and liberal, because he desires but little or nothing for himself. He flies from his own honour, and blushes at the idea of a superfluous satisfaction. St. James illustrates and inculcates humility in this important bearing of it, by a text which conveys the best counsel in very beautiful language: "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth; so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."

Here the apostle shows how God inspires humility into the hearts of rich and honourable men, whom he previously endues with faith; namely, by calling them to a serious consideration of their own instability and vanity, and of all those outward comforts which they so amply enjoy. The conviction of this nothingness in riches, in connexion with the humility produced by it, seeing there is nothing in them of which any man can reasonably boast, preserves the wealthy possessor from the improper influence which otherwise they would exert upon his mind.

There is another state of mind to which we would turn the careful attention of the reader; we allude to that of love, or "charity," as the common version renders it. As charity and avarice are in perfect opposition to each other, one of them must fall in the conflict, leaving the victor to enter on the full occupation of the heart. He who desires to be saved from covetousness should remember this, and carefully preserve this Divine virtue in all its purity and vigour. This love, indeed, is the very goal to which the whole drift of this essay ought to aspire; instead of being the means of accomplishing the end contemplated, it is absolutely the end itself, to which all our other considerations are subservient. As he whose object is to banish darkness must take measures to introduce light; so, whoever would effect a cure of the evil of which we have been speaking, must direct his labours chiefly, if not wholly, to this one point. And without the states of mind referred to above, this noble charity can never be enkindled in the heart. They must also be urged with peculiar force, as the great and proximate causes of true charity.

On these, including love, all that can be said upon the general question ought to bear. The great moral change which they imply must, of necessity, become the experience of him who would renounce his covetousness and acquire a character of genuine liberality: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Should he fail of this internal renovation, no reflections and arguments, adduced to show how awfully responsible he is for the application or non-application of his wealth, or calculated to demonstrate how unreasonable, how odious, how punishable is this detested vice, could have any ultimate success in the attempt to convert him from a temptation so infatuating and so powerful.

Even general arguments drawn from the Scriptures would, in case of the capital omission just referred to, be void of all essential weight, and would be justly ranked, in this respect, with the unsuccessful attacks of the uninspired moral writers to whom we adverted in the commencement of this essay. Satan himself will not greatly object to a literary perusal of the books of Proverbs and of Ecclesiastes by all the sons of avarice, provided they continue strangers to the epistle to the Romans. All the common reasonings, therefore, on this subject, whether drawn from the Scriptures, or from other writers, are only useful as they lead the unconverted sinner to those essential states of mind which we have named, or as they throw the apostate professor back upon those states, because they are the grand sources of the liberality from which he has departed. And we regret, that a brief essay, purporting to glance at the general subject, does not admit of that full attention to those states, in their influence on covetousness, which their paramount importance so obviously demands.

We may observe here, that some spiritual writers have strongly recommended the special and extraordinary cultivation of some one grace or principle of the Divine life as a likely method of effectually advancing the whole. This arises partly from the uncommon power and range of some graces, when compared with others,—as, for instance, faith compared with meekness; partly from some graces being the immediate cause of one or more of the rest; and partly from the intimate connexion and mutual influence which subsist among the whole. In this view, what more important grace could be selected by the man who desires to conquer avarice? Instead of observing little pretty moral devices,—such as some, for instance, have recommended in regard to anger, to repeat a hundred *seriatim* till the passion cool,—let him go to the very foundation of the evil. Let him pluck it up by the roots. Not content with vanquishing the out-posts, let him seize upon the citadel, and dislodge the enemy from the very seat of his annoyance. Love to God and man should, therefore, be the object of his most assiduous attention. He should incessantly pray for this "most excellent gift of charity;" avoid every thing likely to injure it; and diligently fan and foster the purifying flame by every holy art of which he is capable.

IX. PRACTICAL MEASURES RECOMMENDED.

In order to complete the remedy, certain courses of action must accompany the foregoing states of mind. The foundation being laid, the superstructure must be raised. And he who refuses to attempt any practical measures which might interfere with his beloved covetousness may fear lest his money perish with him; for he is yet "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." So long as he remains fixed in this refusal, no hope can be indulged of his recovery.

Of those practical measures, we shall only mention two,—a constant course of sincere and fervent devotion, and a persevering endeavour "to do good and to communicate," even in opposition to the bias of the mind. These, on the part of the believer who has sunk into worldly-mindedness, may, by the Divine blessing, be the means of rekindling in his heart the dying flame of benevolence.

The spirit of devotion, by which the soul aspires to God, is directly opposed to worldly-mindedness, can never grant it the least allowance, but must wage war with it to the death; and if this spirit live and flourish, it must speedily, and of necessity, subdue its antagonist. This is not only agreeable to the doctrine and tendency of the Gospel, but is matter of experience. Let any man reflect upon the frame and firmness of his own mind, just after he has been holding happy communion with his God, and drunk largely of the strengthening and elevating joys which result from fervent prayer; and he will find that he is new armed against all temptation, and that even that of covetousness would melt before the burning devotion of a heart so entirely consecrated to God, and more than ever qualified and resolved to resist all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Did the Christian warrior always maintain this position, he could not fail to go on conquering and to conquer. But there is a great proclivity in human nature to sink down from high emotions into a state of partial apathy, which is usually a state of weakness and unguardedness. Here a watchful disposition is invaluable, as recalling the soul, at proper intervals, to return with unfailing punctuality and fervour to that gracious throne from whence she may again be replenished with all necessary power and courage. And, surely, the man who perpetuates this practice, and pursues these invigorating exercises, through all the varieties of prayer and

praise, of reading and reflection, will have little time or inclination to be exercised with covetous practices. It is greatly to be feared, however, that an antinomian and delusive devotion is but too prevalent among professors; as some, of whose covetousness even charity can hardly doubt, are, notwithstanding, very diligent in all the outward forms of religious duty. Such exercises are, of course, without spiritual profit; and hence it is possible the party may increase in the observances of his devotions and his covetousness together.

Among these exercises of devotion, prayer, with strong cries and tears, against this one sin in particular, must not be neglected. To weed out the attachments of the heart to riches, by degrees, and under the ordinary influence of the means of grace, is not an ineffectual method; and mortification in its own proper nature implies this gradual conquest over radicated vices, whether of the flesh or of the mind; "but utterly to extirpate all trust in them, where they abound," as that eminent theologian, Dr. Thomas Jackson, has observed, "is only possible to the Omnipotent Power, and a rare document of the Divine Mercy." Hence the necessity of faith as well as prayer; faith in the promises, the power, and goodness of God; that what is impossible to man may be felt and known as possible to God. And in the case before us, the faith must be unusually strong, to overtop the mighty evil which it has to overpower. The same writer adds: "If the assent of faith be as twelve, and any natural delight to be removed be as thirteen, that man's faith is worse than nothing. Though we had faith of force sufficient to remove mountains, yet it were possible Achan's vast desires might harbour with it, in the same breast, a wedge of gold which would oversway it, or wrest it out of its place, and hale the soul wherein it lodged, maugre all its force and strength, to hell."

The next practical measure we have named is a resolute performance of acts of liberality, in opposition to the bias of the covetous mind. It is astonishing what powerful effects may be produced upon the character by this method, if persisted in with boldness and trust in God; not merely because custom creates a habit, but because some extraordinary assistance from above appears to be gratuitously bestowed on such decided and sincere endeavours to obey God. Let him who seeks emancipation from this vice but give more or less largely, and increase his gifts, in spite of himself, for some considerable length of time, in the

meanwhile looking to the Strong for strength; and, to his own amazement, he will find a new nature flowing in upon him, which will lead him to still more liberal and delightful communications. If with this he combine a general system of mortification, giving battle to all those propensities to please which he began to accumulate and to love money, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;" grieving before God because of his covetousness, and fasting and praying with the express view of beating down so dangerous and powerful an enemy, he will soon find the spiritual benefit of all these plans of attack and defence.

X. MISCELLANEOUS SUGGESTIONS, ARGUMENTS, AND REFLECTIONS.

HAVING dwelt so long upon the general inquiry, we come now to certain miscellaneous suggestions, reflections, and arguments, which, by a Divine blessing, may complete and confirm the design of the more essential remedies suggested above. Too little space, perhaps, is left for what remains to be advanced. In apology it may be said, that a strong desire was indulged to place the leading features of the entire question before the reader, from an opinion, which we advance with great deference, that a more salutary impression may be expected to accompany the truth as it breaks from the whole orb of the subject, than from any limited and partial aspect in which it might be viewed. Though in such sketches the substance be but slightly marked, its effect, we think, is stronger, at least in moral and religious questions, than that of single considerations more amply pursued. Still such single considerations deserve all possible regard; because, as we have before observed, they may be divinely blessed as the means of reverting the eye of the conscientious mind to those vital measures which alone can exterminate the evil; and which, again we regret to say, have in this essay been so faintly pointed out.

A few remedial suggestions may be mentioned here as of a minor character. They imply the previous adoption of the principal remedies, and are merely designed as expedient and auxiliary.

Are you consciously covetous? Think how by this sin you break the golden rule of doing to others as, on a change of circumstances, you would wish them to act towards you. Seriously reflect, whether you do not by this violation quite forget the actual equality of all men as possessed of a common nature, and

the possible equality of all as to outward condition? Are you certain you can never be reduced to the state of poverty and wretchedness which you now coldly overlook in other men, for whose relief, however, you may profess to feel? But if you think your state unchangeable, yet remember, those who suffer are your brethren; have the same sensitive, and noble, and immortal nature with your own. Is it a right state of things that there should be such a mighty, such a painful and unnecessary, difference between you and others? Do not impiously roll back the charge upon Providence, supposing such a state to be divinely arranged and approved, because permitted. Difference in rank and station does not necessarily require in any class a miserable condition. God sends enough for all, but leaves them to the justice and charity of a right division of it. The fault of a wrong division lies, no doubt, at the door of a vast number of the classes and individuals, even of those who suffer want. But let the covetous man, in particular, impartially consider what a mighty share of this guilt is justly chargeable on himself. Let him feel to the quick, if shame and feeling yet be left to him, the righteous reproach of a Heathen:—

> "No fiercer crime, of all by Heaven accurst,
> Than fatal wealth's ungovernable thirst."

Be humbled from the consideration, that the liberality of the ancient Pagans should have exceeded what you have done; though pride was their principle, and piety is yours. Shall vice, then, be really more productive of brilliant acts of goodness, than Christian charity? By no means. Let not religion be blamed, but those who profess it. Where its fruits do not appear, there its roots are not implanted; though sanctimonious professions may seem to show the contrary.

The mind may be greatly affected and benefited by calm, frequent, rational, religious meditation on the vanity of all earthly enjoyments. No topic of reflection is more commonly adverted to than this; and yet it seems not to reach the heart of either the moralizer or his hearers. Insincerity, determined cleaving to the world, and grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit, whose influence would otherwise give efficacy to his own truth upon this subject, must be the true reasons why the effect is not produced; for the subject, viewed abstractedly, ought to be the most impressive and practical of any that can well be imagined. "Surely, every

man walketh in a vain show: Surely, they are disquieted in vain: He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." "These words," says Calvin, "contain a profitable lesson; namely, that there is no better remedy to cure superfluous cares, than to call to mind, that the race of our life is as it were but a hand-breadth." This revulsion, on the one hand, should be accompanied with the attraction of "a more enduring substance" on the other. As covetousness, indeed, is partly the effect of extreme narrowness of view and capacity, at least in regard to the subjects in question, it might be well to elevate and expand the mind by the acquisition of all useful knowledge, by studying the sublimity and grandeur of God and his works, the surpassing magnificence of the plan of redemption, and the astonishing greatness, and terror, and glory, and felicity, involved in the worlds of eternity. Is it possible that a mind deeply conversant with such studies should preserve the least relish for the proud and animal, the base and pitiful, pursuits of worldly-mindedness; and should not itself, by the process of this moulding impressiveness, partake in some degree of the dignity and infinity of the objects in which he takes a supreme interest?

To associate with the generous, to read the Lives of the great and disinterested benefactors of mankind, and to yield to the Divine suggestion of giving equal sums if in equal circumstances, may tend to give the soul a noble bearing. From such associations men acquire, at least, the habit of applauding the generous; blazoning them in poetry, and painting, and statuary, as if they belonged to the most estimable and praiseworthy of mankind. Does not this bind the applauders to imitate them? If they have done wrong,—have been extravagant, and proud, and imprudent, in their gifts,—why are they not blamed and discountenanced, instead of being revered and cheered? If they have done well, then let the rich who have joined in the panegyric, honestly and consistently "go, and do likewise." This extraordinary fame, indeed, is partly owing to the rarity with which those noble instances occur. And did others of equal property, and all persons of inferior property, act upon the same principle in their several proportions, sufficient means would then be found for every useful purpose connected with the interests of all mankind.

What a powerful appeal against this sin is contained in that most emphatic text: "Let your conversation be without covet-

ousness, and be content with such things as ye have. For he hath said," as some translate it, "Verily I will never, no, never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Thus God himself becomes the matchless, boundless, ceaseless portion of his people. Surely, surely the wretch who is not content with this proposal, most richly deserves to be damned.

Let him who hoards his money seriously ask himself if he be not ashamed of his character as an useless and, perhaps, pernicious cumberer of the ground; or, as the satirist would call him,

"The insolvent tenant of encumber'd space."

Because their substance is not available till they are dead, such persons have by many good writers, by a plain but proper figure, been compared to swine. And the ancients have fabled, that Narcissus, being quite lost in the passion of self-love, when he beheld his own beauty reflected in the fountain, remained continually and uselessly fixed and gazing, till at length he was turned into a spring-flower of his own name, the fruit of which, to pursue the same idea, frustrates expectation, This flower was consequently dedicated to the infernal powers. And a great poet of our own speaks of a son,

"Whose father for his hoarding went to hell."

It is surprising that covetous people, many of whom are persons of cultivated minds, should not appear to be sensible of the absurdity of their conduct,—to say nothing of its iniquity. They boast of being rich, yet live in poverty; (for he only is rich who possesses what he has;) and form infinite desires which no increase can satisfy. It would be quite as rational, on their principles, to adore, and fortify in the bank, a hundred thousand pebbles as a hundred thousand pounds. They turn the means into an end, and live upon the *idea* of property instead of the *reality;* they "feed," as the prophet says, "upon the east wind." They cannot personally possess more of food and raiment than other people; and, in defence of their superfluous treasures, their conduct seems to exclaim, with a wisdom quite marvellous, but, "O! the pleasure of taking from a great heap!" They bless and adore the rich, yet envy them; that is, they indulge two principles in perfect opposition to each other. There is the pride of some equipage out of doors, but, within,

great meanness and narrowness. The whole is out of keeping, like golden ornaments which sometimes accompany the rags of the sloven. From selfishness he looks upon his own life as of unparalleled importance, and anxiously collects great treasures to preserve and gratify it; yet should some poor man snatch it from the deep, and restore it in safety, he would put the value on it of some miserable pittance to his generous deliverer. The aged are proverbially absurd in amassing riches, because they are just about to leave the world. But there is no end to these discrepancies. The worst inconsistency of all, however, is paying this idolatrous homage to the world, and yet unblushingly and statedly responding in the sanctuary, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee:" And adding, to the same holy and omniscient God, "Thou art my portion, saith my soul." What are these but cursed falsehoods? Surely God must say, "Shall I not visit for these things?"

We cannot refrain from frequently reverting, in some form or other, to the greatness of this sin; and we hope every sentence of this essay has more or less reflected light on its revolting visage. Though it assumes the garb of virtue, is admitted to mingle with the very best and loftiest ranks of civilized society, where dishonourable crimes, as they are called, would not be permitted to appear; and though it often gravely bows with saints in the temple of the Lord; and sometimes in robes of sacredness is seen to minister at the altar; it is, notwithstanding, by comparison, one of the very worst of crimes. It is in some respects much worse than the grosser sins of personal intemperance. It is more directly opposed to the will and honour of the true God, because it is conscious idolatry. It is more voluntary as having, in the deliberate and constant commission of it, much more of mind and will than the others, which are rather overpowering instincts, of the nature of "the insane root that takes the reason prisoner." Hence, it is observed, in Ecclesiasticus, "There is not a more wicked thing than a covetous man, for such an one setteth his own soul to sale;" that is, with thoughtful calculation weighs the matter of this awful exchange, and with a cool and decided mind gives up his interest in the kingdom of God, just for what earthly price, be it little or much, he can possibly obtain. In short, this sin is one of prodigious range and power; overspreading the whole man,

poisoning all his principles, and purposes, and passions; is the seed and cause of every other sin; rules and aggravates the innumerable vices to which it is constantly giving birth; and its turpitude and baseness are only surpassed by its abominable wickedness.

How desperately wicked must the heart of that man be who can bless himself and his guilty companions in the commission of such odious crimes! He "blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." With regard to this important and energetic text, the latter part has very opposite significations assigned to it by translators; some rendering the words, "He contemneth or abhorreth God." Not to enter into the argument,—we may just observe, that the common version is most probably the true one; as forming with the preceding part a just and beautiful antithesis, and as supported by the uniform tenor of both Testaments on the subject of covetousness. We are aware that these reasons might possibly appear invalid in the light of severe biblical criticism, but the sentiment itself is safe, and therefore we adopt it.

The plain judgment of human reason, the common sentiments of mankind, and the natural feeling of hatred and contempt, expressed by every class of persons, even by the covetous themselves, on this subject,—all these are mediums by which He who has imprinted them on human nature, loudly declares his estimate of avarice. But in the page of Revelation this estimate is given with infinitely greater amplitude, and clearness, and force. In the first place, he ranks this sin, not only with the greatest crimes, but sometimes at the head of them. He has classed the covetous wretch among "idolaters, fornicators, adulterers, thieves, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners," 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; with "lovers of their ownselves, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors," 2 Tim. iii. 2—4; with those "out of whose hearts proceed evil thoughts, murders, wickedness, deceit, foolishness," Mark vii. 21—23; and with such as "like not to retain God in their knowledge, and such as he has given up to a reprobate mind, and are filled with all unrighteousness, maliciousness, envy, debate;" with "haters of God, and despiteful, inventors of evil things, whisperers, backbiters, disobedient to parents, without understanding,

covenant-breakers, implacable, unmerciful," Rom. i. 28—31. If this infernal association does not speak thousands of volumes as to the mind of God respecting this great crime, we ask, Where can that mind be at all discovered?

This estimate is farther seen by the indignation of God, announced in all its various and most dreadful forms. Avarice put the whip into the hands of Christ more than once, when he arose with the vengeance of a holy zeal, to drive it from God's temple. O think of infinite love made angry! of his meekness and gentleness turned into fierceness! his grace and pity blazing into just and holy wrath! "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him." In this let the guilty lover of the world behold how God abominates the sin which he, on the contrary, blesses as the chief and darling source of all his hopes and enjoyments.

The threatenings of God most unequivocally demonstrate the same abhorrence. These are as numerous as they are dreadful and alarming. If we select but one, as at random, we shall be inclined to suppose it might have stood for all the rest, as quite sufficient to shake the whole soul and frame of the most covetous man on earth with dreadful horror and dismay, and sever from him the filthy idol he has long held to his heart, by the mighty blow of its judicial and terrible announcement. It is this: "Ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten: Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire: Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." The whole history, indeed, of the Divine inflictions on this one sin, as it might be amply gathered from his word and providence, in regard to the punishment of cities and of families;—not omitting what we constantly perceive in common life of the misery of mind attendant upon covetousness; and all in certain and inseparable connexion with infinitely greater miseries in the eternal world, and which are hastening forward, like a tumultuous tide, on the self-secure and easy fool who is about to build his barns;—yes, the whole of this appalling history, or, rather, prophecy, speaks with the trumpet-voice of Sinai what is the estimate of covetousness in the infinite understanding and judgment of God. How soon will another trumpet at the last day rattle in the ears of the avaricious Babylon of this world!—"O thou that dwellest

upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness!"

And let the sinner know, that to abhor is to loathe and detest, with a mixture of anger and scorn. Scorn adds terribly to the agony of other sufferings. To this, as well as to sympathy, there must be something analogous in the Divine Mind. How greatly it must aggravate the shame and pain of the covetous in the presence of all worlds! "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." And all this only strengthens the evidence, that God abhors the covetous. What proof, then, is wanting to show the utter wickedness and folly of the contrary estimate of him who attempts to falsify the unequivocal and firm decisions of Almighty God, by making earth his idol?

XI. EXAMPLES.

The subject we have attempted to sketch in a faint and general outline, might now be illustrated, and the principles of its practical design and operations strongly enforced, by appropriate examples and instances, on both sides of this question. Full-length portraits, in their own respective costumes, situations, and employments, might vividly exhibit both the good and the evil of which we have been speaking, in a fresh and very impressive light. But as this essay has perhaps been extended much beyond its proper limits, we cannot, for the present, even enter on the subject. Our Divine Pattern, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the great apostle Paul, are the two grand, yet not the only, examples on the admirable side of the subject. And, not to go beyond our own times, the Howards and the Reynoldses, produced by the British Isles, are most interesting subjects of study and of commendation. Beholding these, in contrast with the characters on which we have dwelt so long, we might fancy we beheld, even on the canvass, the frown of sorrow in the former, and in the latter, at least, the gathering and downcast blush of conviction.

XII. MEASURES AND PROPORTIONS OF GIVING.

We must now conclude with some brief observations on the measure of benevolence expected from those who have been cured of this great evil; or from all who are possessed of superabundant property, which may be applied to the temporal and spiritual good of others.

Under the Mosaic law every family possessed its own peculiar portion, on which a certain charge was fixed for the benefit of the poor. This charge, however, appears to have been the *minimum* of communication, while the possessor was invited by many reasons and inducements to heighten his piety and usefulness by still larger gifts. The Gospel also has its rules, but they relate to the principles, and not to the details; to the diligent and serious cultivation of piety and zeal for the Divine glory, and of a burning and conscientious charity for all men. As the absence of rules of life, in some minute cases, gives scope for prudence and other virtues, which otherwise could not be so well exercised; so the want of an exact measure as to almsgiving, and works of benevolence in general, affords great scope for many signal exercises of charity and liberal feeling. Hence it is that, in Scripture, the strongest and most frequent exhortations and commands are given in reference to the charitable bias of the heart, while not a word is uttered which requires a certain sum and share of any specified amount of individual property. Of this the lover of the world takes a very unfair and ungenerous advantage, making rules for himself, which regard some petty measures, very coldly but nicely calculated, and having no relation whatever to any boundless wishes of the liberal heart, and the ample sufficiency of the means he enjoys. Nor would even these petty measures be afforded but for some frown from his legal conscience, or some pride, or policy, or the pressure of some importunity which he can scarcely resist.

Some say a tenth of income is a proper rule; but if that income should be extremely small, and attended with real difficulty and distress, it might be too much; if, on the contrary, the income were very ample, and far above the wants and station of the possessor, a tenth might be too small. Others, more cautious on the saving side, have named a tenth of all annual profits. Here the careful soul, with no small stretch of nobleness, actually consecrates one part to God, and lays by *nine* parts for his own still dearer self. Surely, this is beating down his Maker in the bargain, even to the farthing; and this he takes without a blush.

The rich do not profess to live upon the scale of the lowest possible supply of their personal necessities; nor does God himself, or charity, or reason, ask this of them. The claim urged by the rich is, that they ought to live upon a good scale

of civil respectability. But they demand the privilege of determining for themselves the extent of what is thus respectable. In some sense they have the right to do so, for sumptuary laws in states are obsolete; and if the laws of worldly justice be not violated, every man may live as expensively as he pleases, without the least restriction. But there is a court of equity above, which, by its own eternal rules of what is proper to be done in every case of riches, will finally determine and reward their possessors. In the mean time, let this gentleman of respectability compare himself with some more liberal person in the same rank of life, and whose property, perhaps, is not quite equal to his own, and let him reduce his property by acts of benevolence to the same inferior level; if this be done, will he not still possess respectability, in a true and sufficient sense of the expression, as well as all the necessary enjoyments of life? Nay, might not both these gentlemen descend from their present species of respectability to another of the genus just a little lower, or, perhaps, one lower still, and yet, in all reason and conscience, be sufficiently respectable, keep the same respectable company, and retain, if we may use the expression, all the essential luxuries of life? Thus the abominable hoarding of property would, at least, be precluded. What objection can there be to all this? We think it admits a very liberal allowance to the party, while it gives very great enlargement to his highest interests in the wider exercise of a most delightful and rewardable benevolence.

The objection, perhaps, will be, that this would go to reduce the elegant enjoyments of society, to the preparation and commerce of which articles so many thousands owe their livelihood. In reply, it may be said, that this objection proves, if any thing, too much, at least, for the covetous; it proves, that, while he is possessed of money, he ought to consume still more of those luxuries with a view to that kind of usefulness to which he has referred; and here again his beloved hoarding must be at an end. But must private consumption be measured by the benefit it brings to the vender, without a qualifying regard to the personal and religious duties and interests of the purchaser? At all events, the money-lover has no claim to this plea; for if he be a consumer, it is sure to be on his own account, and not with a view to serve the public. But if all were to act on principles of economy, and industry, and the moderate enjoyment even of what may be called "luxuries,"—of course, we refer to those

who could procure them,—there would then be more than sufficient for the comfortable supply of all classes of society; and the plans of liberality which we have endeavoured to enforce would be, indeed, the very best to promote a flourishing and advantageous commerce.

After all, we must recur to the heart: A good state of the heart will suggest far more just and noble rules of action, than the most powerful and logical understanding devoid of such a state. It will teach the rich, without the help of casuistry, the true sense and application of the golden rule already quoted, to do to others what we could wish they would do to us,—a rule which we ought to charge home upon our consciences and feelings in every case which presents itself as an object of benevolence. Let us remember, that, whether we choose to "give of our penury" or not, we are absolutely bound to "give of our abundance;" or, as was said before, of our superfluity. And if the possessor scarcely know how much to give in certain cases, let him be willing to be convicted, and instructed, and amended; let him pray to God for direction, yielding promptly, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to benevolent emotions, and liberal suggestions. This sincerity cannot but be divinely guided and prospered. But if the bias of the heart be on the other side, if it demur to generous plans, and if it keenly pry for reasons to justify a narrow line of conduct, and laboriously strive to make it harmonize with duty and propriety, there will be very little hope of liberal measures from that man. If you recommend him to gain all he can, to save all he can, and to give all he can, he will adopt the first two parts of the counsel literally and cordially; but the other—to give all he can—he will cut down and qualify, and torture to his own liking, till charity becomes impatient of his drivelling, and takes her flight from the selfish Jesuitism of a heart not right with God, and on which all the mighty motives to benevolence which emanate from God himself, through the bright and burning medium of the Gospel, make no more impression than successive suns upon a mountain of eternal snow.

XIII. THE CONCLUSION.

THE question now is, whether, in all the various views which we have taken of this subject, the odious sin of covetousness has been justly represented? Those views, we think, harmoniously

and fairly give evidence against it as highly criminal, notwithstanding it prevails, even in the moral and religious world, to a very great extent. The inference, then, is this, that professing Christians, in general, are by no means sufficiently aware of the great, the infernal, the dangerous, the dreadful evil, which is so commonly entertained amongst them; and that whoever is at all convinced of living under the guilt, the ignominy, the bondage, and the wretchedness of such a disposition, should turn his attention more than ever to his state before God, as fraught with the vilest ingratitude to that Divine Saviour "who for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," and with the greatest inconsistency and hypocrisy, because it is coupled with the grave profession of the faith and hope of the Gospel, and supreme regard for spiritual and eternal possessions. But Christianity does not yet deprive him of all hope of mercy; she still addresses him, and says, "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." This same insulted Saviour may yet receive him graciously, and love him freely; washing him from all his sins, even from the loathsome taint of "filthy lucre," in the free and precious fountain of his own atoning blood.

"Extol not riches, then, the toil of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare, more apt
To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise."

MILTON.

A

RATIONAL INQUIRY

CONCERNING

THE OPERATION OF THE STAGE

ON

THE MORALS OF SOCIETY.

Valeat quantum valere potest.

A

RATIONAL INQUIRY,

&c.

I. THE QUESTION STATED.

The imitative arts instruct, or polish, or recreate the mind, chiefly through the medium of the pleasure they inspire. Their immediate object, therefore, is to move with delight; and for this they are well adapted in their own peculiar character and operation. To explain the reason of this pleasure, it is ingeniously observed by some celebrated critics,—that, in imitation, our instinctive love of knowledge is gratified, and our acuteness of discernment flattered, by discovering a resemblance between two things. A chief cause, perhaps, is the richness of two ideas instead of one, as in language where comparison or metaphor is employed. It may also be allowed, that the talent of the imitator strikes with much force; a force the most agreeable, exciting admiration, and disposing the mind to take a pleasing interest in any subject which the artist may choose to delineate. It is merely something peculiar in the subject itself, and in its circumstances, that can beat back the tide of pleasure which attends upon resemblance, and turn the whole into a scene of horror or disgust.

Imitation, then, will please different persons according to their different intellectual tastes, and moral habitudes and feelings. Still, in every instance, imitation tends to please. Hence the picture of a rotten tree, or an old house, subjects in themselves revolting, gives a charm to the fancy.

Shall we then allow that every thing may be imitated? Have such arts no bounds? May obscene prints, for instance, if

ingeniously executed, be allowably exposed to the public? Should "poison" be called the subject imitated, and "sweetness" the imitation, could any one be so enslaved to pleasure as to swallow down a mixture of both?

Apply this to the theatre, which imitates human character and life. The pleasure here is allowed to be great. Poetry itself is rich in imitation. He, therefore, who personates a character by poetic expression and by action, presents a double enjoyment to the auditor. This, together with its splendid accompaniments, forms a compound of pleasures that cannot fail to fascinate; for pleasure, of one description or another, is the element in which mankind seek to dwell.

The intense charm of theatrical entertainments was the very reason why Plato deemed them dangerous, and on which he built all his objections to them. It is true, he was the well-known enemy of poetry in general; but this does not subtract from the weight of his opinions when he offers them on argument. It only goes to say, that he was not always in the right, which, I presume, may be said of even the most distinguished patrons of the theatre; yet who would draw the conclusion, that, therefore, he was no authority?

Suppose, then, it be proper to imitate certain parts of human life, it will not be contended that all transactions really occurring, or of possible occurrence, may be publicly imitated. The position is too monstrous to be dwelt upon for a moment. The Greek rules of the drama itself point out some things which are forbidden to be acted; not merely because they are deemed poetically bad, but because they are morally so; nay, they are pronounced poetically vicious for the express reason that they are immoral.

The exhibition, however, of immorality, to some extent, is essential to the existing stage; for characters perfectly good, or good characters without bad ones associated in the same piece, would not possess probability; a circumstance which would destroy the illusion. Besides, without the excess and collision of certain evil passions, that dramatic interest or effect could not be produced, which is professed to be the grand excellence of the drama. A chief question then occurs,—How far may moral evil be thus exhibited with safety or advantage to society?

He who reasons on this question from what is peculiar to the authority and substance of the Christian system, as distinguished

from every other, encounters difficulties in the outset. Infidelity denies his principles; and the truth of Christianity must be agreed upon between the parties, before they can advance a single step in the argument. Should they decide the previous question against the sacred Scriptures, they might then, perhaps, unite to follow pleasure, on the maxim,—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Though, should the infidel allow of patriotism and humanity, as the meeting-place of conflict, it would be quite possible, in my opinion, to resist, on this comparatively narrow field, with ruin to his cause, any defence which he might make in behalf of the theatre.

Suppose, again, they should unite in embracing Christianity, it might still be a question,—Are we agreed as to what this system is? For example: If the one assumes love to God as a ground of his objection to the theatre, and explains himself as to his conception of this love, that it implies, among other things included in supreme attachment, the liveliest joy to see the honour of the Divine name held sacred among men, and the most sensitive alarm and sorrow at the contrary; properties which, in their proportion, belong essentially even to that love which a man owes to his friend in civil society; the other probably replies by saying, "What you call love to God, I call downright enthusiasm." And here, again, the argumentation is at an end.

Or, should the controversy be prolonged, with some good accidental reasoning on either side, the parties, finding their feet not fixed upon the rock of proper data, beat the wind instead of reaching their respective objects; severally seizing, with clamorous avidity, on some vulnerable part of the opposing argument, and treating it at great length. But do they forget the body of the reasoning? O no! That must be touched, for here lies the policy of doing the thing completely.

He who fights against the theatre, perhaps, goes on to dogmatize, as if his own naked opinion were sufficient to give law to the public; and it is well if he does not assume a manner of illogical dictation amounting to overt acts of uncharitableness; and thus his well-meant endeavours only injure the cause he means to support. On the other hand, his opponent, instead of arguing dispassionately and candidly, or ceasing to argue at all, when he thinks contempt should fill the chair of reason, strives to be somewhat witty and corrective, in a plentiful use of the terms "cant, saintship, puritanism, hypocrisy," &c. But as morality at

large, including the recognition of the Christian scheme, as to those of its parts and properties in which the professing world are agreed, presents probably an arena into which all who concern themselves with the controversy may most conveniently enter, it is but consistent with this common ground, that the dispute be conducted with equal fairness on both sides. Having now said this much, I shall beg the candid indulgence of the reader to the joint force of the whole of the following remarks.

II. ON THE DIRECT TENDENCY OF DRAMATIC EXHIBITIONS OF VICE.

We think the representation of that which is intrinsically criminal, or improper, is, not absolutely, and in every possible instance, but as commonly shown upon the theatre, of very pernicious tendency.

We think so, in the first place, from the nature of dramatic personation. Some passions, indeed, may be properly embodied by the arts, or otherwise, for deliberate examination; others are, in their own nature, when exhibited, so insidious and contagious, that, in regard to such, all moralists agree to urge, "Your safety lies in flight." With such it is extremely hazardous to tamper, though under the design of strengthening our virtue by the mock encounter. Agreeably to this distinction, St. Paul, referring to one description of such passions, says, "Flee youthful lusts," which, we are elsewhere informed, "war against the soul."

Now, we are affected in proportion to the breadth and colour with which a subject is presented to our perception. A subject affects with but comparative slightness by means of the thoughts. Written words and sentiments are signs which involve a still more impressive medium. The same subject, supposing it to be within the art of the painter, would touch yet more powerfully if presented to the eye in a picture. The naked force of oratory might further add to its influence. But exemplified by the living imitation on the stage, the effect is most powerful; especially as the whole receives a peculiar augmentation of effect from the action. There is thus a material difference between a play perused in the closet, and seen as performed.

In whatever way we choose to present any instance of moral evil to the consideration of others, it is our duty to stop short of seductiveness. In doing so, we ought to observe a scale of im-

pression, fixed, I think, by the experience, good sense, and morality of all the worthier part of mankind. As to the language of a wicked man, for instance, it might be such as, read in private, would merely address itself to the understanding, or fancy; but spoken by a public actor, would reach the passions The same base individual might again use terms, an account of which, and of the character expressed by them, might be given with propriety, as an epic poet does when he speaks in his own person, but which would not be decent or proper to be written *verbatim et literatim*. He might even proceed to such expressions, cruelties, and abominations, as to render it impossible to describe them at all with decorum. It was, no doubt, this danger of acting wickedness which gave rise to the observation of Plato, that "the poets should be obliged to imitate good characters, or not to imitate at all."*

We need not seek for proofs of either the existence or importance of this scale. A single instance will confirm both. Phryne was a female whose character was scandalous; an accusation was, therefore, preferred against her in the courts of Athens. Hyperides defended her with all the force which rhetoric and love could inspire. "But, as what is spoken to the ears," observes Dr. Smith, "makes not so deep an impression as what is shown to the eyes, he found his eloquence unavailing; and, effectually to soften the judges, disclosed the beauty of his client. This was an argument in her favour which could not be resisted, and, therefore, it is said, she was immediately acquitted."†

Now, passions of the above dangerous description are of the very essence of the modern theatre, as acknowledged and lamented by its best and warmest friends. Christianity, which has improved all other institutions, affords, it would appear, no counteraction to this tendency of the stage; the ancient drama, with few exceptions, being, in this respect, comparatively pure. A Heathen audience thirsted for intellectual enjoyment: We are sensual, and must be entertained with shows and tricks, and corrupted and perverted passions. Nay, the author of the "Poetics," with all his love for tragedy, is very sensitive even on the subject of painting, as endangering the morals of youth. He says, "Young men should not be permitted to contemplate

* Rep. iii. p. 401. B.

† See the Notes to his Translation of Longinus.

the works of Pauson, but those only of Polygnotus, and of other artists, who excelled in moral expression."* It may also be observed, that what is originally innocent will sometimes be morally injurious in the copy. Might any common courtship, though proper in itself, be indiscriminately shown to youth? What, then, is the neutralizing circumstance that makes the dramatic imitation safe and useful?

I now submit, whether this argument does not receive much additional strength from a second view of the subject,—that of the corrupt state of society. The theatre is allowed to be a place of hazardous enchantment, even for those who yet are uncontaminated by temptation. Sir Walter Scott himself, a distinguished friend of the stage, (for I will not alarm the reader with puritanical authorities,) in his elegant "Dissertation on the Drama," when speaking of the immoral influence of genteel comedy in particular, makes the following concession:—"It is not so probable that the 'Beggar's Opera' has sent any one from the two-shilling gallery to the highway, as that a youth entering upon the world, and hesitating between good and evil, may, for instance, be determined to the worse course, by the gay and seductive example of Lovemore, or Sir Charles Easy." Parents, who place a value on the virtuous character of their offspring, and who feel a corresponding alarm at any circumstances which might seem to threaten it with such danger, will feel the force of the quotation. This one sentence, from so eminent a critic, they will judge, speaks volumes.

What, then, must be the effect of the system, bearing down, with repeated and accumulated strength, upon the corrupt and abandoned part of the populace? It remains, however, to be shown, that such vicious persons come in any great numbers within the range of theatrical influence; for some well-intentioned persons, who resort to this amusement, find it difficult to believe, that the company with whom they mix is very generally immoral; is not, indeed, respectable. "Respectable" and "moral" are epithets of widely different import. That persons of respectability, as the civil custom of society terms them, are frequently at perfect variance with Christian morals, is most evident from the single instance of allowed intoxication; to omit several other instances of immorality, of which a gentleman, in

* De Rep. viii. 5.

this charitable world, may continue to be guilty, and yet maintain a character confessedly respectable.

That, in many cases, vicious characters constitute the body of the theatrical assemblage, is acknowledged by the above high authority, who observes of the London theatres, that, "unless in case of strong attraction, prostitutes and their admirers usually form the principal part of the audience." The same may be said, in lower but proportionate degrees, of theatres in the country. Whatever be the cause of this corrupt assemblage, the fact is the same. Indeed, if the theatre be a place precisely suited to the relish of the immoral classes of society, and only not quite so much adapted to the taste of those of an opposite description, (whether this taste in either case be sound or not, is here of no consequence,) it follows, that the majority of the audience will be at least of deficient character on the score of Christian morals.

This has been illustrated, I think very happily, in some such manner as the following:—Let the moral genius of the theatre be ascertained, as poisoned waters have sometimes been tested by the introduction of a healthy fish into the fountain, which fish has betokened the suspected fact, by showing a certain restlessness or languor. Let a person, for instance, of cultivated piety and morality, attend on the services of religion; he is perfectly at home, he is happy. Introduce him to the theatre. Is he now in his element? Does he enter, with a genuine and vigorous joy, into all that is passing? A person of this character, if we even suppose him capable of sometimes resorting to the theatre, as an innocent amusement, so denominated, cannot possibly admit of that delightful absorption of his faculties in this pursuit, which he allows in those grand duties of life that are perfectly congenial with his virtuous inclinations. He will abandon it the moment he finds it forfeiting, by an excessive excitement either of the spirits or of the passions, the character of an exhilarating relaxation. Nor will he be always at the play even when he requires to be amused. Other recreations will, with him, have their turn, and that in proportion to their comparative degrees of importance. Were it not so, he would seem to be the slave of this single enchantment, which is contrary to the virtues we suppose him to possess. Pleasure is not his business, and the theatre will not be a place of his much-desired resort. Considerations of expense, &c. which the vicious,

in their love of this amusement, overleap at one free bound, will frequently detain him from this scene of gratification. Remember, I do not grant the virtuous instance in question; but merely suppose it for the sake of argument, because it is in favour of those who plead for the drama.

Now, let us behold a person of abandoned character and habits. Lead him to church or chapel. Is he interested and delighted? That is impossible. Conduct him to the play, and what do you perceive? listlessness and unconcern? No, indeed! The man is in an ecstasy of pleasure. When he sat in the church, his thoughts were sometimes in the theatre; now he is in the theatre, are his thoughts gone to church? Nor is this a fancied view of the subject: It is matter of established fact. Now, on this principle of moral taste, neither church nor theatre will be a common ground of meeting between these two characters. In other cases they may associate, and with mutual satisfaction,—as to transact business; but at the appearance of some grand moral test, they will naturally separate. Should each, then, on some extraordinary occasion, be found in the place, (church or theatre,) which stands opposed to his moral preference, it will arise from some subordinate consideration, and not from the general spring and character of the mind. There are, however, obvious reasons why immoral persons may be expected more frequently to visit churches, than good men the theatre.

The inference deducible from these observations, is, that, generally speaking, the theatre will be the resort of vitiated characters. Nor is it an argument against this, that numbers who attend the play are very far removed from the most vicious of the audience; and are comparatively decent and respectable; for moral evil can subsist in a multiplicity of modifications and degrees, among those who, though far from avowing the principles of the infidel, are greatly destitute of Christian morality, or piety, and would indeed feel some shame to be considered as much concerned about it.

That society is in a corrupt state, is indisputable; and the argument is the same, whatever be the origin of the mischief. If it be acquired merely by example, as some affirm, I should think this is not much in favour of fictitious specimens of moral evil; and one great advocate of the stage expressly attributes human depravity to the principle of

imitation.* If it be the developement of something properly original, innate, and rooted in the character;—thus presenting a material highly combustible to the fire of temptation, as the Scriptures, in my opinion, have put beyond all just exception;—it may then be judged, before the fact, what would be the result of a theatrical picture of immorality moving with seductive life before the eye of the vicious, even on the supposition that some corrective circumstances accompanied the representation. The heart is more likely to sympathize with that part of the exhibition which is the entertaining archetype of its own character, than with that which is pure and good; as the steel leaves other substances with which it is but loosely connected, and rushes on the magnet. And this chiefly because of the pleasurable imitation; for the same evil judiciously set forth in words, or incidentally discovered in real life, would probably produce a very different and much more salutary effect.

History abounds with instances of moral evil; but these are not to be compared with dramatic pictures of this kind. I recur to the scale of impression referred to above, and ask, Is there not an obvious, an essential difference between narrative and action? Besides, as the chief design of history is not to entertain, but to instruct, it is by no means so liable as the drama to stray from the path of utility. And the frequently unnatural and false outline and structure of fictitious characters, which Sir Walter Scott particularly charges on the German stage, must be dangerous in the last degree; such virtues and vices as are, in truth and fact, incompatible attributes of the same person, being sometimes found in combination; lasciviousness, for instance, with modesty; not a modesty intended as the mask of hypocrisy, but as an integral part of the man. And what will any Christian say of soothing allusions to the eternal rest and peace of a dramatic character, who died, perhaps covered with sin, and in the spirit of revenge?

It now appears, that corrupt examples on the stage act upon a huge mass of similar corruption. And when we consider how naturally, and without assistance, this corruption overswells its banks, and demands suppression rather than the help of dramatic genius, and songs, &c. to open the way for its highest tide and

* See Fellowes's "Christian Philosophy," p. 122.

spread, one is tempted to ask, in the singular language of a living writer, "Who would add momentum to an avalanche from the Andes, or accelerate the bolt that speeds from the secret place of thunder?"

The vicious character of plays in general is a third argument on this subject. This character is either essential or incidental. It appears that the essential rules of the drama, as invented by the ancients, require at least a hazardous exhibition of bad sentiments and passions. It has, indeed, been thought quite possible to construct a tragedy or comedy which might be innocent and edifying. This was the opinion of the celebrated Richard Baxter. What sort of theatre it would be, which should exhibit nothing truly dramatic, or resembling real life,—nothing, or next to nothing, of moral evil, contrasted with its opposite,—nothing of the pungent interest which arises from depth of plot and passion, it is difficult to say. It might be edifying, as preceptial and declamatory, employing dramas something like the fourth kind of tragedy specified in the "Poetics," as chiefly sentimental, and which the great critic deems the most insipid sort of tragic writing; yet in this kind of acting there would probably be something tame and uninteresting on the whole, as an affected imitation of reality. It would, however, be essentially different in its abstract principles as an art, from the theatre as invented by Æschylus, and transmitted to modern times. It could, probably, be little more than a tiresome and unmeaning succession of recitations, pronounced by different persons, traversing the boards, and occasionally looking in the faces of each other.

The true character of the Christian, showing meekness under insults, forgiving his enemies, and humbling himself with uncomplaining, unimpassioned submissiveness to the tempestuous Providence of Heaven, would make but a sorry figure before a popular audience. The actual stage, then, in its best and purest forms of Grecian moral, we think, is dangerous, because the principles of its very structure and being require, that it present the living image of palpable wickedness.

What, then, shall we say of the multitudes of plays which contain much more of wickedness than the rules demand, and wickedness, indeed, in contrariety to the rules? We need not appeal to the entire history of the drama for the proof of this. The writings of its most distinguished and respectable defenders

concede and lament the fact. The mighty Shakspeare, with a genius truly marvellous, and intellectual beauties more than matchless, cannot be indiscriminately read in any decent family; and he is acknowledged to be by far the purest of all his contemporaries. In the time of the second Charles, the stage became still worse, and presented a series of comedies which Sir Walter Scott allows were "fitter for a brothel than for the library of a man of letters." Afterwards, in the days of Congreve, affairs were not mended. The elegant writer, and candid friend of the stage, above quoted, says of the comic writers of this period, "They form a galaxy of talent scarce to be matched in any other age, and which is only obscured by those foul and impure mists which their pens, like the raven wings of Sycorax, had brushed from fern and bog." With what superior wit, (his occasional severity affects not the argument,) and sense, and learning, Jeremy Collier swept them, at least from the stage of controversy, extorting penitent submission from Dryden himself, the prints of that time still sufficiently declare. "At the perusal of Collier's Satire," adds Sir Walter, "men started at the mass of impudence and filth which had been gradually accumulated in the Augean stable of the theatre during the last reigns." And when another Collier shall arise to dissect the plays which have since appeared amongst us, it will then, but not till then, be seen, with some conviction on the public mind, that we have not materially improved in the morality of stage-playing. Gross indecencies have been abated; but all the pernicious seductiveness remains.

Indeed, it always will be so while the morals of society continue in a corrupt state; because the stage must conform to the taste of the people. This conformity is not denied, but is freely acknowledged, and often used as an exculpation of the poet and the player. This has been the case from the beginning, as the author of the "Poetics" himself admitted the objection; and Lewis Vives* informs us, that "comedy treats of the knaveries and tricks of love, being brought into it by Menander, to please the Macedonians that stood affected to such passages." Modern critics make no hesitation in confessing this michievous property of the theatre; among whom Mr. Pope observes, in his preface to Shakspeare, "It must be allowed that stage-poetry of all

* See his notes on St. Augustine, p. 59. London, 1620.

others is more particularly levelled to please the populace." Moliére has tortured the character of Alcestes, in the Misanthrope, purposely to excite laughter, and laughter too of the most pernicious tendency, considering the qualities of simplicity and goodness which are frequently the subject of it. This, we think, is admirably proved and illustrated by Rousseau.*

Hear, again, from the prologue written by Dr. Johnson, and spoken by Garrick, at the opening of Drury-Lane Theatre, in 1747 :—

> " Ah ! let not censure term our fate our choice,
> The stage but echoes back the public voice ;
> The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
> For we that live to please, must please to live."

A still more striking, nay, shocking evidence of theatrical compromise, the public will remember, took place some years ago, when it was regularly proposed to effect some alterations, in one of the London theatres, for the purpose of excluding a certain class of females from that part of the house ; and when the proposal was rejected for this reason,—that the measure would occasion the absence of multitudes of the other sex, who visited the theatre on purpose to meet with this description of company. At the time when the horses were introduced upon the London stage, Mr. Sheridan observed in parliament, that an intellectual taste so vicious was not to be ascribed to the managers ; but to a luxuriant state of society, in a country abounding with riches, and fastidious in its entertainments. Such managers would not, probably, be over anxious to contradict the moral taste of the people.

Other evidence on this particular will not be asked, otherwise an abundance might be produced, and from the same indisputable authorities ; authorities all ranged on the theatrical side of the argument. And let it be distinctly remembered, that this particular bearing of the stage is not to be considered as an occasional abuse, but as a principle interwoven with the essence of the system, and which must necessarily operate, with more or less degrees of force, as long as society shall continue to be corrupt, and the theatre attempt, as its leading design, the entertainment of the public : A strange state of things, by the by, as the theatre, according to the English editor of Riccoboni,

* See his " Thoughts on Different Subjects," vol. ii. p. 7.

"has ever been esteemed the best school for polishing and improving the manners of a people." The auditor may boast, "I school my master!"

Now, I ask, Is there the shadow of this flattering and pernicious suppleness in Christianity? Are not its fallible ministers, whatever be their differing opinions on other points, or, indeed, whatever be the private character of individuals of their body, unanimous in publishing the purest morality? Whoever knew of a minister preaching revenge, and pride, and lasciviousness? Such is the dignity of sacred truth. Itself thus immaculate, and unbending as the pillars of the earth, it must stamp with its own authoritative reprobation a system which, as in the case before us, can plead self-convicted of lowering that lofty standard of moral purity which the Eternal has planted by his own right hand; and can still, to please and live, (O more, much more than dishonourable baseness!) repeat and defend the desperate presumption!

And while the audience hold themselves in possession of this sovereignty, we may judge of the nature of the tasks to be imposed on the performers. And from this action and re-action of the parties we might further predict what would be the alarming consequence as to the state itself, did not some counteracting elements mix in the composition of civil society. Hence, though a certain policy has led to the legal toleration of theatres, governments have still considered them as evils to be carefully watched and restricted. At the Restoration, even our dissipated Charles found it prudent to limit them to two for the metropolis. Had they been schools of virtue and good manners, it would have been excellent policy to multiply them by hundreds.

In the fourth place, we observe, that the imposing circumstances of the theatre, the oratory, the decorations, the music, &c. give prodigious effect to the characters and manners represented, and, by consequence, to the moral evil exhibited. The critical Rapin concedes, that "in the theatre the heart yields itself over to all the objects proposed to it; that all images affect it; that it espouses the sentiments of all who speak; and becomes susceptible of all the passions presented to it, because it is moved." * Now, is not this sufficient to throw the mind from its balance? "Amid this general dance and minstrelsy"

* See his "Reflections on the Poetics."

will the heart, perhaps already greatly corrupted, regulate the general effect, so as to resist the undue impression of what is evil, and carefully select that small portion of moral good which comes floating like a straw upon the general tide? If persons of rank or education, accustomed to splendour or reflection, should, from their intellectual strength, maintain some superiority and fixture of mind, will this be the case with the inferior parts of the audience? Indeed, the swollen grandeur of the whole is calculated to operate on the romantic and aspiring notions of multitudes in every rank of society, in awakening morbid sensibilities and wishes, and in returning them to the low vale of ordinary life, dissatisfied, if not disgusted, with its plain and unadorned realities.

Again: The great influence of strong and gratifying impressions, frequently repeated on the mind of youth, in forming the character by slow and almost unconscious degrees, must be obvious to every thinking person. By the dramatic representation, for instance, of a brave but revengeful personage, admiration is excited, an admiration greatly heightened by the pleasurable emotions of the evening. Thus the seed of similar revenge is sown in the unguarded heart, which may neither be of immediate nor of rapid growth, but which, when injury is felt, will show itself in the same loftiness of honourable resentment, so called, and give, perhaps, a determination of this kind to the character through life. The same might be said of other passions, which need not here be specified. That the mind takes its tincture from the subjects with which it is particularly conversant and delighted, is no new discovery: Demosthenes remarks, "In my opinion it is altogether impossible, that those who are occupied, for example, in matters of trifling import and unworthy of their attention, should ever possess an elevated and vigorous turn of mind; for it must necessarily follow, that of whatever nature be the pursuits of men, such will be their sentiments and inclinations." *

It is, therefore, incorrect to suppose, that the theatre has no pernicious tendency, because the whole audience do not, on their dismissal from the play, immediately, unanimously, and violently proceed to the full degree of delinquency of which man is capable; as if moral causes produced their effects with the same

* 2 Olynth. 4.

certainty and promptitude which are observed to attend the operation of causes in the physical world. Temptations the most gross and powerful do not always take effect. Shall we, therefore, say that they have no tendency to mischief? Is there no danger in the field of battle, because some are merely wounded, and some escape unhurt? Nothing could be more vile and demoralizing than the religious rites sometimes observed in several of the Grecian temples; yet numbers, it is well known, maintained, notwithstanding their attendance there, a conduct such as we sometimes describe as a life of common decency. Some have led the life of a drunkard for nearly four-score years; but what physician will aver, that drunkenness has no tendency to destroy the constitution of the frame? "Those deceive themselves extremely," observes the prince of Conti, "who think that plays make no ill impression on the mind, because they do not find them excite any formed evil desire. There are many degrees before one comes to an entire corruption of the heart; and it is always very hurtful to the soul to destroy the ramparts which secured it from temptation. One does not begin to fall when the fall becomes sensible: The fallings of the soul are slow, they have their preparations and progressions, and it often happens, that we are overcome by temptations, only by our having weakened ourselves in things which seemed of no importance; it being certain, that he who despises little things shall fall by little and little."

The immoral consequences of the theatre will not, probably, be so immediate and notorious in persons of repute and decency, who have fixed upon their minds the conviction of its innocence, and have accustomed themselves to enjoy its impressions, as in the case of those who secretly suspect or admit its evil tendency, and yield to the tempter. In this last instance, the energies of the soul, in her endeavour to shake off a troublesome suspense, are roused by a sort of desperate struggle which, if it be determined on the wrong side, may speedily be followed by overt acts of crime; because those energies continue, impelling the mind to action after its choice has been decided; as he who attempts to reach a certain point may, from his vigour and impetuosity, run considerably beyond it. Some farther illustration of this principle may be seen in the frequent fact of young men of innocent, but undecided, character, coming up from the country to reside in London, and after the determined purpose has been

formed to indulge in wicked pleasures, becoming even more fierce in the pursuit of folly than the native idlers of the capital.

But the former case, mentioned above, involves no opposition. All is peaceful, harmonious, and uniform. The heart and its allowed amusements move consentaneously in the same direction. The mischief, however, is not the less effectual and diffusive. It makes a silent but certain way to the inmost soul of the man, and feeds and strengthens the more corrupt elements of his character; a character, perhaps, of common, not of Christian, morality; the character, indeed, of those whom St. Paul describes as "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." This idolatrous excess of pleasure will be cherished by the theatre. The most that can be said is, that this fashionable sort of morality is not materially affected by it. Still the theatre serves to rivet the dreadful chain of sinfulness and curse which is unconsciously sustained. There may be a hidden process of iniquity where these is no monstrous burst of passion, or of actual disobedience to the authority of God. For instance, the calm and constant grasp with which pride or envy holds the human spirit is, in some respects, more mischievous than paroxysms of anger, and always more deceptive.

Perhaps some friends of the theatre will admit the existence, to some extent, of the tendency in question, but will rest the cause on certain principles of moral effect interwoven with the drama, which are presumed to give the whole a virtuous turn; as the law of gravitation acts upon the planets, and attracts them from their projectile inclination into orbits of surprising regularity and usefulness. The testing of these principles will be the subject of another section.

III. OF THE PRINCIPLES OF MORAL OPERATION ATTRIBUTED TO THE DRAMA.

It was observed, that certain principles of effect, interwoven with the drama, are professedly the means of rendering the system, especially acted specimens of bad character, highly advantageous to the morals of society. It remains to offer some remarks on the inefficiency of these principles.

In the first place, much imposing disquisition has been written to show, that the tragic excitement of terror and pity tends to purify the passions. Here the effect is thought to be accom-

plished by a sort of moral vaccination; the natural complaint, as fierce and destructive, being prevented by the artificial introduction of the same disease, to operate in a milder form. This process was originally asserted by the celebrated author of the "Poetics," but was not by him very fully illustrated. Hence, his commentators and disciples have widely differed on the subject; some thinking the purgation referred to pity and terror only, and others that it reached through these two passions to all the rest; one party contending that it involved the simple tempering of both, and another that it went to dispossess the soul of their very existence. Certain critics deem it nothing more than the result of the moral lesson of the tragic scene. And some eminent expounders of the stage have denied the fact of this purgation altogether.*

What great use would arise from being freed from pity, it would be difficult to point out. Nor is the moderating of these passions of the first importance in the moral process. If the great bearing of the theatre went, with some success, to curb the selfish passions of pride, sensuality, and covetousness,—and to strengthen and expand the whole train of the benevolent ones,—there would then be some colour for these lofty pretensions of the stage. We deny not, that, for the time, a certain soothing, softening, pleasurable melancholy may be diffused through the soul, by the feeling of pity artificially excited; but that this will improve, in real life, the pity of the man whose general principles are bad, we cannot understand. It is neither explained nor proved. Nor does the fact confirm it; for it is commonly remarked, that those who are most attached to works of fiction, and can weep most plentifully at scenes of imaginary woe, are frequently, of all others, the most insensible to the practical effect of scenes of genuine distress. Accustomed to the high seasoning and excitement of the theatre, the common food of pity, furnished in the afflictions of real life, loses much of its stimulating property, or, perhaps, becomes distasteful. It may here be added, that a moderate excitement improves the habit of the feeling, while excess commonly terminates in morbidness and apathy.

The pleasure of this tragic emotion, it is probable, is the

* See Manwaring on the Classics; Twining's "Notes on the Poetics;" "Essay on the Theatre;" Pye's "Commentary on the Poetics," &c.

chief design of the auditor, and hence he is not likely to go beyond his object. How, then, can the pleasure which is indulged on a principle of selfishness, issue in the generosity of a genuine tenderness? This self-amusing auditor, no doubt, will take pretty good care that his favourite prejudices and vices, which used to corrupt his fear and pity, shall not be dismissed on his return to common life.

Now, one single instance of this kind, I think, would be sufficient to throw discredit on the theory. Christianity can never fail to effect the highest moral purification in the mind that fully yields to its imbuing influence; the evil lies in repelling this sacred energy, even among those who make profession of its principles. But behold a man beneath the awful sovereignty of the tragic scene. He has entered the theatre with the wish to be conquered. He is the willing, the delighted subject of such thrilling emotions as put him in possession of the genuine spirit and full force of the tragic system. He weeps profusely at the imitated sorrows and perplexities of the hero, and retires with an ineffable sadness, and sympathy for the hapless image that still moves to the view of his enamoured fancy. He returns, again and again, to be the still more perfect subject of similar impressions. Is he not now a prodigy of fraternal kindness, and an angel of benevolence to some wide-extended neighbourhood? On the contrary, he becomes increasingly insensible to the interests of his friends and family, in the habitual neglect of his duty towards them, and finally begins to lose all pity for himself, and accelerates his own destruction by a succession of egregious follies. Nor is this fiction, but fact; as the cases, were it requisite, could be readily produced. Few, I believe, who are thoroughly acquainted with the history of any given theatre, will be unable to point out numbers of such instances. Suppose the above unhappy character be not thus demoralized by his attendance at the theatre, still he is himself an evidence of the inefficiency of tragic emotion as to its alleged value in the cultivation of his pity.

On the other hand, the existence of this passion, in its happiest developement, among thousands of excellent and valuable men, who, to say the least, have never formed the habit of attending the theatre, seems still further to narrow the importance of tragedy as to this particular view of its power. The great Howard is an instance of the most genuine and finished sensi-

bility, but this was not acquired at the theatre; his religious principles, as well as his benevolent pursuits, precluding at least his habitual appearance at such an amusement. As some, however, may observe, that single instances prove nothing, I ask, (and the argument entitles me to ask,) Are those, in general, who frequent the theatre, distinguished above others for a purified, and rational, and useful tenderness of feeling? And have the most eminent benefactors of mankind, speaking of them as a body, owed their eminence, as far as a moving pity has contributed to form their character, to an attendance on the theatre? And, on the other hand, are the enemies of the theatre, viewing them at large, more obviously and decidedly the subjects of an uncharitable and obdurate kind of feeling than its friends? If all this must be denied, we have then a right, (at least I think so,) to conclude, that tragedy is not possessed, in any tangible degree, of that celebrated property of purifying the passions which, it would seem, has made its most shining figure in the writings of literary men.

Mr. Twining, perhaps the most sagacious and candid of the commentators on this subject, is by no means confident. Having stated his opinion, he modestly submits it to the judgment of his philosophical readers. And thus a doctrine, that assumes a pompous character of profundity and utility, in the theories of the drama, is reduced, even by the discrepancies and concessions of its friends, to nothing, or next to nothing; as far, at least, as relates to its practical bearing on the moral improvement of mankind. But if the virtues, after this flooding of the soul with pleasure, are said to grow of themselves, unknown to the understanding, or will, or conscience of the moral agent, I think we shall then be justified in saying, that there is even such a thing as theatrical enthusiasm! And whether all this sort of feeling is not equally removed from principle, and from truth of character, with the false inspirations of fanaticism, which gentlemen of the theatre, in their distinguished zeal for true religion, profess to expose, I will leave to the sense of the discriminating reader.

Indeed, considering what are the component parts of moral character in the generality of tragedies, it might seem that pity would be even pernicious, melting the soul to the love of the hero, and endearing his evil qualities, if not his crimes, to the audience. To conclude this topic, I presume, that a very superior mode of cultivating this amiable passion, is frequently

to visit the abodes of real sorrow, and on the scene of deeper grief than the sufferer will or can express, to drop our genuine charity, "weeping with them that weep."

But, in the second place, the stage is said to be of great use, because, by its pictures of character, it awakens our instinctive approbation of virtue, and detestation of vice. When it is ascertained, with precision, that such feelings are strictly instinctive and natural, apart from tuition, and the light and power of heaven; still it will be necessary that the spectator come to the theatre with his instinct unbiassed and uncorrupted, else, where is the probability of its favourable excitement? Would one who, through error, (to use a soft word,) believed it right to kill the body for the sake of the soul, detest the sight of a martyred heretic? And will he who is attached to a certain line of conduct by vice, relinquish it from seeing a few instances of its character and mischief imperfectly represented on the stage, while, after having felt the unhappy consequences of his folly a thousand times, he never thought of an amendment?

But should we allow this instinct, how basely must it be decoyed, and bribed, and confounded, by gilded exhibitions of crime in many principal characters on the stage, which are obviously designed, or from the interest they excite are adapted, for imitation? This is the grand evil of the theatre. The rules of the drama have not yet prescribed the proper limits to the acting of moral evil, and the poets have made most ample use of the licence. They go too far, and still not far enough. We detest Iago, but we are pleased with Falstaff. Here again we have the concessions of the mightiest advocates and critics of the drama. The Stagyrite himself, according to Twining, "admitted, with Plato, the danger of poetical, embellished, and flattering exhibitions of vice." Dr. Johnson has observed, "Lothario, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone to teach us at once esteem and detestation; to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, and elegance, and courage, naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain." He adds elsewhere, "There is always danger, lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation."

Indeed, this species of effect is so powerful and certain, that it seems to be a rule, in the formation of the characters, to supply the deficiency of the hero as to estimable qualities, by adorning him with such as are great and splendid; purposely to excite that interest in his favour which otherwise would be sunk and lost.* And the author of an "Essay on the Theatre,"† after having given us critical rules for composing plays, subjoins this admission: "Our dramatic writers seem to have made it their business to familiarize their audiences to vice; and we need make no doubt, that the immorality of the stage has greatly contributed to that universal depravity of manners which is but too visible among all ranks of people." I ask, Can the most perfect Puritanism dictate a more dreadful sentence against the theatre than has been here deliberately denounced by the pen of one of its most intelligent and fast friends?

In the third place, ridicule is another boasted moral engine of the drama. However this may be legitimately applied to the foibles of mankind, I think there can be no question of the monstrous incongruity and perniciousness of a ridiculous personation of crimes upon the stage. What! will any one be cured of drunkenness, and swearing, and cheating, and lying, by laughing at those vices, either in himself, or in a ludicrous imitation of them? This is in such perfect opposition to the Christian scheme, that nothing can be more so. Let any one contemplate the remorse, the shame, the grief, the contrition, contained in the Scripture representations of repentance, and judge whether such opposite modes of amendment can possibly exist combined in the same character? Heathen nations have been known to act on a far more philosophic view of human nature; and Tacitus ascribes the virtue of the ancient Germans partly to their never using ridicule in reference to crimes, but always holding them up to utter abhorrence.‡ Hear, again, the concession of a most distinguished patron and exquisite judge of the theatre: "What is now held the fit subject of comic mirth and ridicule in Christian theatres, was never employed but to stir up the utmost horror and commiseration in the Heathen. The falsehood of the wife or husband has given occasion to noble tragedies; but a Scipio and a Lelius would have looked

* See Twining, Note 155. † London, 1760.

‡ *Inter illos nemo vitia ridet nec corrumpere et corrumpi seculum vocatur.*

upon incest or murder to have been as proper subjects of comedy."*

Supposing, in some cases, and under certain circumstances, the language, not the dramatic action, of ridicule should be admitted as to crimes, still the pleasantry of the thing would belong to the censor, and not to the criminal, who ought to feel the application in the excitement of remorse and shame; for in all instances of ridicule, if, when you laugh at the faults of another, he himself joins in the laugh, you are confounded, and the merriment is now at an end, as evidently useless, or probably pernicious. I here exclude dramatic action, and recur to the scale mentioned in the first section.

Nearly allied, if not essential, to the ridicule of the stage, is comic humour. But what does the highly-gifted writer, just quoted, deem essential to this humour, at least to that which is most popular on the English stage? His words are these: "The historian of Peru tells us, that there were no obscenities in their comedy; and an encomiast of China pretends, that there is not so much as an obscene word in all their language. I am sensible, that though, indeed, these must needs be considerable abatements to the humour of their comic scenes, yet their ingenuity might possibly find means to remedy these defects by the invention and dexterous application of the *double entendre*, which, on our stage, is found to supply the place of rank obscenity, and, indeed, to do its office of exciting laughter almost as well."† From the sacred profession of this vigorous writer, I am willing to believe, that he could not in the least approve of the adoption of such means, in a public audience, to mend the morals of society, though his words might seem to bear this unhappy construction. His authority, however, as conceding the fact of this adoption, is such as no friend of the drama can dispute; and I leave it to the judgment of all good and candid men to say, whether, by the employment of such a species of ridicule, the sanctity of public morals is likely to be well secured and promoted.

Fourthly, great stress is laid on the moral sentiments contained in plays. Is instruction the object of those who attend the theatre? They candidly confess it is not. Is that instruction afterwards remembered and dwelt upon in conversation? Yes,

* See Hurd's "Horace," vol. i. p. 114. † Ibid. vol. i. p. 251.

when the propriety of this amusement is contested; then, but not till then, they abstract it, with some difficulty, from the rest of the piece, by way of vindication; shifting the defence to a plea to which they have no claim, as those who indulge in extravagant dress tell you, it is good for trade.

The piquant amusement which stamps the character of the stage forbids any solemn recognition of religious considerations. Tragi-comedy is condemned by the rules of dramatic writing, because with the strong tide of one sort of feeling, that of its opposite is met in a manner too abrupt and violent, to the distressing confusion of both. Transferring the principle to the moral view of plays, it answers equally to good taste and experience, that the solemnities of religion should not be mixed up with loose recreations, such as light music, &c. It follows, that the moral sentiments of the theatre can never be presented in a genuine light, and as fixed upon a true basis. They are not drawn from the pure fountains of the sacred Scriptures, and are, therefore, mixed up with much of dangerous error in relation to the principles of morals; and, supposing them to be unimpeachably sound, yet the points to which they approximate are comparatively few, and those by no means of the first importance. Nor are they sanctioned, and riveted upon the heart and conscience, by any serious and direct recognition of Divine authority, and of the awful tribunals and appointments of eternity. Indeed, moral sentiments are not to be found at all in many long acts of the most popular productions. I speak generally. The exceptions are, however, so extremely few, that though, collectively, they might impose upon the mind by their absolute extent, yet given in their relative proportions, as parts of an immense whole, they would diminish almost into nothingness.

Are we not, also, in much danger of omitting to discriminate between morality and that which is merely intellectual? The ancients sometimes used the terms "good" and "bad" in a wider sense than was correct, or safe, as to morals; reckoning wisdom and eloquence among the virtues, and what was trifling and mean, among the vices. Who can help smiling at the moral virtue of walking with stateliness along the streets of Rome?* A little of the same inaccuracy has crept into our own language,

* See Cicero *De Off.* lib. i. 36.

especially as used by ignorant and vicious men when speaking under the influence of strong prejudice, either for or against the subject of their observations. "Such a gentleman," observes St. Francis of Sales,* "is said to have many virtues and perfections; for he dances gracefully, he plays well at all sorts of games, he dresses fashionably, he sings delightfully, speaks eloquently, and looks well. It is thus that mountebanks esteem those in their way the most virtuous, who are the greatest buffoons."

Where is the morality of Shakspeare's beautiful description of Dover Cliff; and of an infinity of other passages in the same great author? His intellectual beauties are great and numerous, but the pure moral of his works, when sifted from the mass, will be reduced within a very narrow compass; nor is this at all surprising, if, as Dr. Johnson thinks, "he wrote without any moral purpose." The indiscriminate perusal, therefore, of such mixed productions, by young persons, unadmonished and uninstructed, as to the difficult and dangerous path which leads through this enchanted ground, must be attended with such hazard as no Christian parent would wish to put in the way of a beloved child.

And is not superior instruction to be obtained elsewhere, without the great moral risk and danger which all parties agree to be connected with the theatre? Is it wise to take the dangerous side in a doubtful case of great importance? Is not this to march up to the verge of the precipice? But the good things are usually lost in the preponderance of the evil things, and in the amusing effect of the whole. Again: Those who plead these good things forget to balance them with another kind of instruction, with which they are often found in artful combination;—the instruction, by precept or example, how to manage an intrigue, to subvert the authority and elude the vigilance of a parent, to cheat a creditor, or to hatch some conspiracy against a magistrate or a sovereign. The amazing talent and dexterity with which these projects are conducted, through the invention of the poet, are not often equalled in the history of real corruption. And to teach the younger part of an audience the art of expressing the passions, is often dangerous, were it only from the principle, that a facility in

* See *Philothea*, chap. xvii.

such kind of expression re-acts with strengthening power on the passions themselves. The question, then, is, whether the virtuous part of plays in general is such as to counteract their native tendency, or turn them to advantage?

Indeed, the good things of a play, it is to be feared, are frequently, in a moral view, the worst; as they identify themselves with the whole tissue of the piece, and lend the authority of truth and sanctity to error and iniquity. At the close of a drama, which has entertained the audience with living pictures of vice, some fine moral is suggested, which, like satan as an angel of light, sheds a deceptive radiance over all that has preceded, and bribes the conscience of the unwary; who are now very willing to believe, that they have been most virtuously employed, instead of seeking nothing but their own gratification. Still, the common observation is, "There are many good things in plays." Granted. But where is the argument? So there are genius and morality in Don Juan, and the writings of Lord Rochester; yet who will say this justifies the publication of such trash?

Lastly: A profound principle of dramatic operation lies in the ideal character of the whole; the truth of history, which dwells on such instances as are particular and defective, being rejected; and the abstract of nature being adopted, to furnish pictures of far nobler properties and dimensions than can be seen in the world of reality. This the drama has in common with the other arts of imitation. The principle is important, when legitimately applied, and gives to the mind the conscious proof of its own eternal destination, where alone it can find objects vast as its loftiest desires. The colossal statue, the pyramid, and every other instance of imaginative grandeur give a swell to the soul, and accustom it to expansion; thus equally imparting to it vigour and refinement.

In the drama, however, the principle is carried to excess; the entire subject, and scene, and action, being raised so high above ordinary life as to prove too much for human weakness, producing an intoxication of the mind which often leaves behind it vacuity, imbecility, a contempt for the common allotments of Providence, and an extreme disinclination to the plainer and self-denying duties of social relationship. Hence, if the imagination should have been pre-disposed to extravagance, certain ruin is the consequence. A person of this description, after leaving the theatre,

feels a mighty inclination to transact business on the high ground of dramatic existence, and to buy and sell in blank verse.

The principle has its bounds, like every other source of pleasure and improvement. Again I recur to the scale, and observe, that a much more extended accumulation of imaginative existence may be advantageously presented to us in writing, than would be at all safe and proper in an artificial realization before a promiscuous audience; where, at least, in many instances, neither the level of the intellect, nor the state of the moral principle, could sustain the overwhelming weight of the general impression. The truth is, in dramatic characters, the moral evil is drawn out into such dimensions, is so frequently the subject of the action, and yet receives so much of interest from nobler qualities, that the auditor becomes more familiarized with vice than is safe and proper; and when opportunity shall tempt, he scorns to be confined within the bounds of vulgar life; his love must be romantic, his resentment must be dreadful, his ambition must be Roman.

The popularity of the drama leads to monstrous abuses of the ideal property in question; multitudes of writers being brought into operation, who are nearly destitute of the genius, and of the knowledge of mankind, which are necessary to a just conception of character. Hence poetic taste is outraged, and morals endangered, with a frequency that cannot fail to produce the most fatal results. It is not so with other arts. If, for instance, the works of the sculptor show not something of the true ideal and perfection of his art, men of cultivated minds, instead of purchasing his statues, will utterly discourage him. But any thing in the form of a play will be applauded, provided it be stimulating; whatever be the nature or tendency of the interest excited. The stage abounds, in consequence, with dramatic characters constructed as by perfect chance, and with a wildness of combination in regard to moral properties, which sets truth, and consistency, and good effect at absolute defiance. This is a fruitful source of that most dangerous display of character, already noticed, in which great virtues are seen to associate with the worst of principles, and sometimes with their opposite vices; leaving the false impression on the ignorant and unwary, that with such vices one may still properly assume the designation of a good man. On this subject, the uninformed reader may be satisfied, by selecting almost any chief character of the drama, and applying to it the authoritative

doctrine of Christian morality. The very touch of this doctrine, I presume, will be like that of Ithuriel's spear.

IV. OF THE EFFECTS OF THE STAGE ON THE MORALS OF SOCIETY.

The recorded quantity of crime which flows from the native tendency, or,—if the reader think it more correct,—from the abuse of the stage, is very great. That, however, which is daily witnessed, but not published to the world, must make a still more painful impression on the actual observer. But with the addition of what must be rationally presumed to pass unseen by the virtuous inhabitants of a country, the whole must be prodigious; must present a most appalling mass of evidence to prove, that, apart from all abstracted reasonings, the system, practically considered, cannot sustain the semblance of a solid vindication.

Having offered arguments arising from the nature of the drama, may I be allowed, before I mention facts, to produce two striking pictures, coalescing with those facts and arguments, and traced by the pencil of a master? Notwithstanding the fancy which some may suppose to be thrown into the composition, they will, if I am not much mistaken, be recognised as generally accurate, (and my purpose needs no more,) in presenting the similitude of the real subject. They will, perhaps, have the greater weight, because extracted from an article, in which the reasonings on both sides are dispassionately balanced by two conflicting interlocutors, between whom the president of the council, at the close, cannot settle the dispute, but makes the free confession, that he finds himself unable to decide the controversy.* The opposite opponent does not dispute the facts of the case. He says, "All this is much to be regretted: But how is it to be stopped?"

"Let us imagine," observes the writer, "a troop of comedians entering a country town in England, in which, sober, quiet, and industrious habits have hitherto prevailed. Let us imagine the modern Thespis arrived in his cart. His very arrival is the signal for irregularity and confusion. Let us suppose, that he has obtained permission from the worshipful the mayor to exhibit his performances for a week. In that one week there will be more mischief done, more heads turned, and more obscenity committed, than in all the rest of the year. In that short time will be sown

* See "Council of Ten," vol. ii. No. 5.

the seeds of evil, that can never afterwards be eradicated. A lively imagination might draw from such an event a most interesting and instructive picture of life, which might almost make us weep amidst our laughter. All must go and see the players. They will listen to wild rants or licentious expressions which they ought never to have heard; they will behold scenes and situations of which they ought always to have been ignorant. Nor is this the worst: Their old customs will be broken; their useful occupations will be neglected; the tranquil tenor of their existence will be disturbed. Where all was peaceable and contented, there will be now the commencement of disorder, and a secret dissatisfaction at the monotony of their usual state of being. Simplicity will give way to a love of dress and display; late hours will be kept; strong excitements will be required; half the young men will be corrupted by the actors, and the women will learn to imitate the tawdry finery of the actresses. The theatre, whether barn, outhouse, movable building, or whatever it may be, will be a place of intrigues and assignations, and an opportunity will be afforded for the execution of all the mischief which has been meditated within the twelve months. The players, in the mean time, will have set an edifying example of idleness, dissoluteness, want of principle, and laxity of morals; they will have run in debt with half the tradesmen in the town; and, as their last grand *coup de theatre*, will decamp in the night without paying a bill. Here is a familiar instance exactly in point. Such is the practical influence of the stage; such are the actual effects of dramatic representations. Such, too, are the sentiments and habits which are engendered among actors by their profession and way of life."

Our author next proceeds to show the effect of the theatre in London: "What, I would simply ask, is the present state of our metropolitan stage? Suppose a young person to enter it, of either sex, whose principles are pure, and whose mind is undebauched, and who has been hitherto accustomed only to simpler and less-exciting enjoyments? What are the immediate effects upon the mind, and what may be the ultimate consequences? The mind must, indeed, be impregnable to all external impressions, if it be not in some degree enervated and corrupted. I shall omit, in this place, the influence of the composition; I shall say nothing of the extravagant rants and raptures by which tragedy caricatures the passions, and teaches us to form a false

view and estimate of life and human nature; nor of the indecent jests in comedy by which modesty is shocked, and morality outraged. I shall not urge, that a good play is only 'a powerful piece of imposture;' I shall content myself with pointing out those outward circumstances, attendant upon every representation of a modern play, which are pregnant with danger, temptation, and mischief.

"A young man, then, we will imagine, virtuous, but not a Stoic, finds himself in a London theatre. His eye is dazzled by the glare of lights; his senses are intoxicated by the appearance of wealth, splendour, and beauty, which surrounds him; his passions are inflamed by the multitude of people, by the contagion of dissipation, and even by the physical heat; and his principles already totter in a place which seems built for seductive gratification, and consecrated to luxury and pleasure. He turns to the stage; he hears strains of music expressly calculated to heat the imagination, to lull the conscience, and to enervate the soul; for, as Ovid says,—

Enervant animos citharæ, cantusque, lyræque,
Et vox, et numeris brachia mota suis.

He sees a beautiful and finely-proportioned woman, displaying her form in the dress of man, and assuming, with a captivating grace, the airs of licentious gallantry. He observes motions and attitudes which, if not altogether so indecorous as the dancing of the Roman pantomimi, or the gestures of the Egyptian alma, are still altogether sufficient to awaken the desires of sense, and provoke the lowest and most degrading of our appetites. Virtue, at least, cannot be confirmed, or good principles be fortified, by seeing a female figurante, Noblet, or Milanie, or Mercandotti

——————'bare the breast of snow,
Wave the white arm, and point the pliant toe.'

He turns from the stage to the audience, and finds, alas! at once, that

'There are more things in heaven and earth
Than were dreamt of in his philosophy.'

He perceives himself in a magnificent abode, which has been erected for the accommodation of abandoned women, and idle, dissolute, half-drunken men. He perceives the presiding deities of the temple are the priestesses of Venus; and, certainly, the

Venus Urania is not the Venus of the theatre. He perceives, that the pervading principles of the place are, laxity of morals, heedlessness of decency, and forgetfulness of shame. While music and dancing, scenery and action, contribute to throw him off his guard, to silence his reason, to drown his scruples, and lay his reflections asleep; he is assailed by nearer and more immediate temptations, and 'his heart opens to pleasure as a flower to the sun.' Here, then, may be the beginning of his follies, his debaucheries, and his ruin.

"Or let us suppose a young woman in the same situation. On the stage there are the same objects to heat her blood, and excite her imagination. She sits upon a seat of infection, and breathes the air of impurity. The spirit of voluptuousness will steal upon her senses, and diffuse itself through her veins, and over her soul. She is familiarized with sights and sounds of vice, and must be either shocked or tainted, or, perhaps, the mischief begins in the one, and ends in the other. It is astonishing to me how any man of sense can take his daughter to a play, where she is liable to see individuals of her own sex in the triumph of their degradation, and to hear the profligate discourse between a debauchee and a prostitute.

"These things are within the theatre. Let us look for a moment to the exterior. We thus discover it to be the centre of licentiousness, the focus of dissipation, the rallying-point for all the thieves and pickpockets in the metropolis. Drunkenness and disorder, knavery and riot, are the evil spirits that haunt its precincts, that stare us in the face, and convince us, by damnatory proofs, of the real influence of the stage. Whenever, in fact, I find its pernicious tendency disputed, I would say to the sceptic, 'Pay no attention to subtle arguments, and metaphysical objections; attach no weight to opinion and authority; but go to the theatre; observe what are, in all large towns, the actual accompaniments of dramatic representations; trust the evidence of your own senses, and form your conclusion by what you see and hear.' Can we possibly deny, that the theatres are schools for immorality, when we know, that they are the nightly rendezvous of the most dissolute characters of both sexes,—that they attract the bad, and seduce the good; when it is evident, that they spread a moral poison over their vicinity, and that the worst houses of the town are almost always in their immediate neighbourhood. The theatres, in my honest

opinion, are one of the chief causes that create that obvious distinction between the inhabitants of cities and the inhabitants of the country, which is so much to the disadvantage of the former."

The perusal of plays, unaccompanied with spectacle, &c., has done much injury to the minds of thousands: We need not except the learned themselves, and persons of strong and cultivated understandings. That plays may thus be productive of considerable mischief, we have proof in the case of Madame Dacier, who tells us she was so much charmed with the "Clouds" of Aristophanes, that after she had translated it, and read it over two hundred times, it did not become tedious; and that the pleasure she received from it was so exquisite as to make her forget all the contempt and indignation which Aristophanes deserved, for employing his wit to ruin Socrates, who was wisdom itself, and the greatest ornament of the city of Athens.* And it is greatly to be feared, that the attractions of the drama not unfrequently make individuals forget all the contempt and indignation which the dramatist deserves for employing his wit to offend a God who is goodness itself, and the greatest Benefactor in the universe. If reading be so powerful, what, then, must be the effect of the living exhibition!

To show the moral influence of the stage, it has been frequently related, that a banker's clerk, in London, who had embezzled a sum of money, with which he intended to embark for America, was convicted of his crime by seeing "George Barnwell" performed, and, abandoning his guilty project, confessed the whole to his master, refunding the property. I am far from being inclined to dispute, as some have been, the truth of this account. It is much to be wished, that many more such instances could be properly authenticated. It is a precious article, and of extreme rarity; it is not surprising, therefore, that the advocates of the theatre should strive to make the most of it, should publish it in play-bills, as an effectual decoy for the innocent, who may hitherto, from moral scruples, have declined visiting this place of amusement.

But the fact here adduced proves nothing in defence of the existing stage as a system. Dissipated characters, in different

* See Percy Anecdotes, "the Stage," p. 13.

scenes of wickedness, have sometimes been shocked at their own crimes and wretchedness, and at the villany and misery of their associates, and abandoned such haunts and practices; ought we, therefore, to encourage such abominable scenes? One libertine may repeat a portion of Scripture, or utter some lamenting exclamation in reference to himself, which shall agitate the conscience, and occasion, perhaps, the partial and transient amendment of another. But what parent would recommend a disobedient son to keep company with this text-quoting vagabond?

It is justly observed by an excellent writer,* when speaking of this circumstance, of the banker's clerk, that, "as the crime of robbery must be sufficiently evident in its atrocity to any mind endowed with the slightest portion of intelligence or reflection, it was not requisite that the young man should go to the theatre to pick up the conviction; and I should make," he farther observes, "a very low estimate of his virtuous struggles against such wicked designs, who, having suffered himself to be overcome by vicious propensities, could pretend to excuse himself by such an apology as this:—'Had I seen my perpetration previously represented on the stage, I should never have committed it.'"

Now, as the players have told one tale, we trust they will suffer us to tell another. In April, 1823, a well-dressed youth was brought before the magistrate, in Guildhall, on the charge of a venerable old man, the father of the prisoner. It appeared, that the son had been religiously educated, and provided with an excellent situation in life, which he had forfeited by improper conduct. He had unhappily contracted an attachment to the play-house: This propensity was his principal infatuation, the evident cause of inflaming his passions, and had nearly proved the source of his ruin. He had repeatedly robbed his parents to supply the means of dashing about in the box-lobby at Drury-Lane, or Covent-Garden, and had been as frequently admonished and forgiven by his afflicted father. The poor old man had carefully saved up £3. 6s. to pay his quarter's rent; but the son had lately forced the desk in which it was contained, and spent the whole sum in three admissions to the theatre, and wine and supper afterwards for himself and a companion. His aged parent was deeply affected as he made the charge; the youth,

* See "Letters to a Son By the Rev. Henry G. White, A.M. Lecturer of St. Mary, Rotherhithe," p. 101.

also, burst into tears, and pleaded "guilty." He was committed to Bridewell for one month.

Nor is this a solitary instance of the flagrant mischief occasioned by the theatre. Should we allow, that the stage can produce its manifold and tangible facts of moral usefulness, (though we may freely declare, that, with a sincere willingness to learn them, we really know not where to find them,) yet probably it will not be disputed, that an awful balance of historic proof belongs to the wrong side of the question. Were every individual, who is but tolerably informed of the effects of the theatre in his own local neighbourhood, to publish to the world his own share of the unhappy facts, what a scene would shock the imagination, and agonize the heart, of the sympathetic reader! Even those, it is hoped, who scourge the opponents of the stage as cruel enemies to the happiness of mankind, and who laud him as the truly philanthropic author, who pours a flood of elegant amusement upon the world, could hardly fail to heave a sigh at the dark and dismal shadows which mingle thus in the picture of their favourite recreation. We know of numbers of young men, (whose names and history, indeed, could now be produced,) who, having entered London with all the virtuous advantages which a pious education might be expected to supply, unfortunately went from the theatre to the brothel, and from the brothel to their graves! Could the patrons and defenders of this dreadful system place their hands upon their breasts, with their heads upon a dying pillow, and aver, "I am innocent of all this?"

To say nothing of the under-current of dramatic influence, which prevails in the secret and gradual formation of the character, and which is sometimes most clearly and unequivocally indicated by a sickly and morbid taste in literature, by negligence of business, and by dissipated habits, certain evils, more immediately resulting from the theatre, have in all ages marked the progress of this dangerous diversion. In ancient Rome the parties who cheered or hissed the several actors often raised such tumults as to interrupt the performance, and turn the theatre, by their absurd factions, into a constant scene of riot and disorder, and not unfrequently of combat and of bloodshed. Similar instances of indecent contention may be found in the times of Tiberius, Marcus Aurelius, Nero, Hypatius, and Belisarius, Theodoric of Italy, Henry IV. Henry

VIII. and Edward VI. of England. The authors who have charged such tumults on the theatre are, all of them, from Tacitus to Stow, writers of established credit.* In consequence of these abuses, most of the above princes deemed it proper to abolish the theatre in their respective dominions.

Many persons, competently versed in history, have not hesitated to account the stage as one among the numerous causes which accelerate the fall of kingdoms; and the worst periods among the Greeks and Romans are believed to have received no inconsiderable degree of their unhappy character from this one source of operation. The history of the French stage for thirty years previous to the French Revolution supplies a multitude of the most disgraceful facts to confirm the truth of this destructive bearing of the theatre.† It is allowed by all, that its influence is great. To deny, then, that it can injuriously affect a country, is to deny what is allowed, unless it can be shown, that this influence is invariably of a pure and favourable quality. It is to deny, in substance, that the press itself is liable to become an engine of public moral or political depravation. Let the office of the Lord Chamberlain, which legally restricts the stage, illustrate the subject. It is observed, indeed, that the stage "was at its highest pitch in Rome during nearly the proudest and purest periods of the republic." But let us ask the candid reader, which is most probable,—that the great and master spirits of those ages, such as Cato the censor, who were distinguished by the loftiest contempt for luxurious amusements, should have derived their character from the stage, and in their turn conferred upon it their decided support:—or, that the drama itself contributed, in no ordinary degree, to that general corruption which subsequently sank into the vitals of the commonwealth?

It is often seen, that those countries, and divisions of a country, where the stage is unknown, are far less corrupt than those in which it holds a seat. Thus, compare Sparta with Athens, and Switzerland with France. This is, at least, presumptive proof, though other causes be admitted also to operate in effecting the degeneracy of a people. Let determining evidence be shown on the other side. The advocates

* See the authorites enumerated in the "Stage Condemned," p. 115. London, 1698.

† See "Domestic Anecdotes of the French Nation," p. 309.

of the stage are required to substantiate, that it ought not to be ranked, as has been done, among those sweeping evils which deteriorate a nation; or that, supposing it has sometimes assumed this dreaded character, it possesses, notwithstanding, a preponderance of public usefulness, sufficient to justify the sanction it obtains.

The same noxious plant is identified from age to age by the production of the same fruit. This is manifest, whether we refer to the local effects immediately resulting from particular plays, or to the general operation of the theatre at large. Of the first of these cases certain instances have been frequently produced, which, though unhappy, yet are, it is presumed, proper specimens of stage-impression, because the pieces have been extremely popular. Though already known to the intelligent reader, it may be proper here to repeat one or two of these instances.

The effect produced by Schiller's tragedy of "The Robbers," on the scholars at the school of Fribourg, was alarmingly powerful. "They were so struck and captivated with the grandeur of the character of its hero, Moor, that they agreed to form a band like his in the forests of Bohemia; had elected a young nobleman for their chief; and had pitched on a beautiful young lady for his Amelia; whom they were to carry off from her parents' house to accompany their flight. To the accomplishment of this design they had bound themselves by the most solemn and tremendous oaths. But the conspiracy was discovered by an accident, and its execution prevented."*

"The robberies committed daily in the streets, during the representation of the 'Beggar's Opera,' were beyond the example of former times. And several thieves and robbers afterwards confessed in Newgate, that they raised their courage in the play-house by the songs of the hero. Macheath, before they sallied forth on their desperate nocturnal exploits. So notorious were the evil consequences of its frequent representation become, that, in the year 1773, the Middlesex Justices united with Sir John Fielding in requesting Mr. Garrick to desist from performing it; as they were of opinion, that it never was represented on the stage without creating an additional number

* See "An Account of the German Theatre, by Henry Mackenzie, Esq." in the second volume of the "Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh."

of real thieves."* What, then, must be the power of the drama in regard to passions much more congenial to the heart, and deemed far more honourable, than that of thieving?

Nor are this taste and its effects less remarkable at present. "Tom and Jerry" still retains its ascendancy in the theatrical world. Here we have a grand specimen of the nature and extent of dramatic influence. Other pieces will sometimes procure a numerous attendance from the presence of some distinguished auditor, or the talents of some celebrated actor; but this *transcendant* composition has the merit of generally commanding a crowded assemblage of the patrons of the stage, all wound up to the height of interest and enjoyment, from its own intrinsic attractions. It is a species of food the most awakening and gratifying to the appetite of the whole menagerie. It throws them into transport. Do you wish to contemplate their character and habits? Then go and see them fed. At other times, indeed, you may, by witnessing their shape and motions, in a less excited state, conjecture something of their properties. But behold them on the occasion mentioned above. Their whole nature is brought out. Every spring and faculty of action is roused. The free current of their unhypocritical and delighted disposition rolls on with a progress which you may mark with astonishment.

Or should you think, on the contrary, that the audience cannot, in this instance, appear in their own proper character, but rather as persons held for the time by the sorcery of their situation; still it will be wonderful to see in their behaviour the perfect power of the dramatic art. It has been thought the perfection of this power to produce the momentary conviction that the actors were originals, and not imitators; as when Mr. Cooke in the York theatre was exclaimed against as a real villain: Here, however, it would seem as if individuals of the audience were consciously changed into the actors, or characters exhibited, and proceeded at once, on their dismission from the theatre, to show the change in a series of follies positively mischievous. The general and lasting impression of a play which can daily produce such immediate and marked effects must be infinitely worse, although this impression is far more difficult of detection and of detail.

* See the Life of Gay, in the *Biographia Britannica*.

As to the influence of the stage on society in general, we have already given a sad concession from the author of an "Essay on the Theatre," written in the boasted time of the celebrated Garrick. To this testimony may be added that of philosophic foreigners. Diderot pronounces English comedy to be "without morals." Voltaire, undoubtedly no rigid moralist, speaks of it in terms of the strongest reprobation. M. Moralt, in his "Letters upon the French and English Nations," ascribes the corruption of manners in London to comedy as its chief cause. "Their comedy," he observes, "is like that of no other country. It is the school in which the youth of both sexes familiarize themselves with vice, which is never represented there as vice, but as mere gaiety." Rousseau predicted, that if ever Switzerland should give encouragement to the stage, she would from that moment begin to lose the purity of her political and moral institutions. Unhappily, the theatre was afterwards introduced; and the subsequent character and state of the cantons have abundantly justified the truth of the prediction. The demoralizing influence of the stage on several of the ancient states is freely allowed by the friends of the drama. They merely offer the evasion, that the theatre of modern times is materially different from the primitive establishment.

V. DEFENSIVE OBSERVATIONS OF THE ADVOCATES OF THE STAGE, CONSIDERED.

Attachment to the stage, or to the opinion which defends it, is frequently maintained by those who feel a manifest conviction of its impropriety. I say "manifest," because with regard to such, in controversy, as already mentioned, acrimonious observations, contemptuousness, and an almost total avoidance of the leading arguments adduced against the theatre, sufficiently betoken the suspicions of their judgment; and their own subsequent confession has often put the fact beyond dispute. With views thus enlightened, many have yet resolved never to forsake the scene of their guilty pleasures, till the avenging fire of heaven, predicted by their own consciences, (for whatever be the character of the stage, such have been their sentiments respecting it,) should overwhelm them with destruction. Others have lingered on the plain with an enamoured reluctance; and, by the ingenuity of the pleadings to which at last they have

had recourse, evinced how high has been the preference of the heart for this enchantment, even when it stood in convincing contrast with the decisions of reason. The following are the principal efforts of their retreating strength.

In the first place we are told, that "some good people attend the theatre." The objector ought precisely to inform us what he means by "good," as applied to character. We should then possess a fair chance of meeting this objection. Do those who evidently rank among the best of mankind, both as to piety and usefulness, resort to the play? Will any one do so in proportion to his advancement in moral excellence? Besides, can good people, so called, do no wrong? How often have we heard this language, "I used sometimes to attend the theatre, but my conscience always smote me for it?"

Observe, many persons of distinguished excellence object to the theatre. How shall we determine between the opposing parties? If the surpassing quality and quantum of virtuous character, on either hand, be not permitted to decide the balance, (though for myself I am quite disposed to risk the question on this issue,) may not the circumstance of unbiassed concession in one case, and of the absence of it in the other, be allowed to have some weight? Again: Are those virtuous attendants at the theatre the law and model of our actions? If so, what is the precedents by which they form their own character? Is it likewise the conduct of other good people? So, then, each is a pattern to be copied by the rest! Is not this reasoning in a circle? Yet should the argumentation be granted, why not follow the example, at least in half the instances, of those good people who denounce this amusement?

The principle, however, of this common objection, is obviously false and dangerous; because the doctrine and spirit of Christianity ought to regulate human conduct, and that conduct must never determine, though sometimes it may illustrate, our interpretation of the rule. That numbers who attend the theatre do also go to church, and observe various forms of religious duty, is acknowledged. But does this prove the innocence of theatrical amusements? I have often thought, that some pious individuals miss their way in appealing to such persons thus, "How can you consistently enjoy the play, and then retire to your prayers?" The truth is, the prayers of some people can consist with any thing. Of this we have a striking instance in the case of a

personage of high rank, from whose private letters, produced in court against him, it appeared, that he could bow his knee in secret, and pray for the partner of his continued guilt; and who, at the time when detected in his crimes, declared, "that he would take his Bible-oath in opposition to the charge" which he expected would be brought against him.* The deceitful snares of the human heart exceed all imagination; and danger must, indeed, be near when that heart becomes its own legislator.

Many pious persons, who once frequented the theatre, are known to have forsaken it as soon as Christianity was seen to give a decided turn and eminence to their character. I refer not to those who have been contemned as puritanical fanatics. How oft has this been witnessed in men of taste and learning! witnessed from the time of Judge Hale,† who, when the stage shone forth in all the glory which Shakspeare had thrown around it, forsook it with the purpose, for reasons which he states, never to behold it more; down to the present century, when, for instance, the amiable Henry Kirke White,‡ at the bidding of his enlightened conscience, renounced the same scene of poetical enchantment, observing, "I feel much for an uncorrupted, frank lad of fourteen, who is permitted to visit this stew of licentiousness, impudence, and vice." And is there absolutely nothing of argument in all this? Could I think so, I confess I should be inclined to suspect, that virtue herself had lost something of her value and authority.

Another observation is, "If plays contain dangerous topics and allusions, so does the Bible?" Might, then, every author introduce, without just cause, such things into his writings, pleading scriptural precedent? The poets might as well vindicate some improper parts of their public dialogue from the example of the private medical consultations of physicians and surgeons. But comic humour will not be found in those portions of the Sacred Scriptures referred to by the objector. Writings ought to be examined with due regard to the spirit and intentions of the writer; and a halo of the brightest sanctity hangs over every subject of that inestimable Book, when the whole is viewed in the grand connexion and scope of its parts. Nor were the topics in question designed by the inspired writers to be acted in a

* See "Remarkable Trials," vol. ii. p. 40. London, 1780.

† See his Letter of Advice to his Grandchildren, chap. xviii.

‡ See his Remains, Letter to Mrs. West.

theatre. If so, I recur to the scale for proof of the absurdity of this objection.

Again: "If the stage be unsuccesful as to usefulness, so is the pulpit." This is by no means owing to any integral part, or native tendency of the Christian system, but principally to that repelling state of the mind which we have already noticed. This cannot be said of the theatre, whose general ministrations we have shown to be pernicious, and which has received into its character, if not its essence, the mischievous operation of immoral exhibitions. Besides, the body of a theatrical audience comes not within the sound of Christianity; and, therefore, religion has not a fair chance, as to such, of demonstrating her power and excellence. If, however, it appears that the audience at church or chapel, is more virtuous on the whole than that which attends the theatre, the objection loses much of its point; and our triumph is complete when the friends of the stage are asked, Where are the unquestioned facts which prove the moral usefulness of your system? Where are your converted infidels, your reformed rakes, your improved philanthropists? Of these Christianity can produce her thousands. It has been shown, that, through some tendency or other, a great proportion of moral evil regularly emanates, in varying degrees, from the stage. Is it then at all probable that usefulness should issue from the same source? "Can the same fountain send forth both sweet waters and bitter?" On the other hand, the world abounds with the most striking proofs of the practical importance of genuine Christianity.

"But there are some who, if they go not to the theatre, will resort to worse places." It is thus a famous advocate in the Scottish metropolis has vindicated duelling. He predicts, that its discontinuance would be followed by poisoning and assassination;* which the reader, I presume, will take to be the essence of the most perfect Jesuitism; of which a leading maxim is,—The end sanctifies the means. Before the objection can tell upon the understanding, the arguments adduced on the evils of the stage must be disproved, and the system shown to be safe and innocent; for no degrees of moral evil, however small in comparison, can be allowed, though with the direct intention of preventing the greatest crimes. The principle, if pushed, would go to vindicate the brothel, because, by possibility, that scene of wickedness

* See Mr. Jeffery's "Address to the Jury on the trial of Mr. Stuart."

might sometimes prevent murder. We appeal to the concessions quoted in this essay, and to many others which might be collected, from the theatrical party, and to the whole history of the stage, as evidence, that the theatre itself is a perfect preparation of the senses and passions for such worse places, and furnishes a path the most direct and opportune to the chambers of crime and death.

Should the objection be admitted, still it could only apply to the abandoned profligates of an audience, and not to sober and religious people. Will any virtuous person say, "I must go to the theatre; for if I do not, I shall certainly go to a place of more abominable wickedness?" This would be a strange declaration in the mouth of a Christian; or even of a gentleman, who, perhaps, void of Christianity, has it fully in his power to vary and enrich his amusements within the limits of perfect innocence; who, indeed, is far from requiring the recreation which the fatigues of life in general demand; and who, because of the peculiar station in which Providence has placed him, will have to give at last, to the great Judge of all men, a peculiar account of the application of his advantages.

Once more: "The stage, like every thing else, requires discrimination; and they are persons of a weak mind who are injured by it. Why, then, because of its abuses, which are candidly acknowledged, should we be deprived of this elegant amusement?" Is not this saying in plain English?—"Let the fools perish everlastingly, for aught I care; if my abstaining from the theatre would save a soul of them, I would not abandon this classical amusement." Most benevolently spoken! So, then, a tempting occasion, to say the least; an occasion of the temporal and eternal ruin of thousands; an occasion which appears from its history to have produced a mischievous effect, more or less, very regularly;—this dreadful occasion, with its consequences, must be perpetuated; and for what? As the price, forsooth, of an amusement! Were the stage an institution of essential importance to society, its abuses, it is true, would be no sufficient reason for its abolition. But how mighty is the balance between ruin and amusement! Can the man be found on earth who will affirm, that the advantages of the stage decidedly outweigh its mischievous consequences? And, when thus found wanting, can it still find supporters in those who assume the benevolent designation of "patriot," and of "Christian?" Shall a parent allow his

infant children to amuse themselves with torches, at the risk of their lives, merely because it is possible they may escape destruction? And when some of them are burned to death, shall he permit the others to resume the dangerous amusement?

It must be remembered, that the stage is a peculiar entertainment. Immense mischief lies in its compound character. As a composition it owes its existence to the corrupt invention of mankind. Let the parts be dissolved, and several of them will lose much of their destructive power. We condemn not all amusement; yet if there be any other instance of the kind, which, like the theatre, is perpetually ruinous to multitudes of the souls and bodies of our countrymen, while its highest character is that of mere amusement, as many of its friends are obliged, though reluctantly, to admit, I hesitate not to say, that it ought to be abandoned. There is a material difference between the artificial and tempting obtrusiveness of the stage, and multitudes of innocent enjoyments, which nature and Providence have furnished for our recreation. These too, indeed, may be pushed to excess, through the folly of mankind; the other is doubly calculated to enchant and corrupt through its own nature, in connexion with that folly.

When the stage is opposed, the votaries of amusement seem alarmed for human happiness. A severe wound is inflicted on their feelings of humanity. The pleasures of rational and animated conversation, the interchanges of friendship, the charms of reading, the attractions of learning, and the beauties of creation, can by no means afford, in their view of things, a sufficient variety and pungency of entertainment. As to religion, it seems to them as possessing nothing recreative or exhilarating. When its burdensome duties are over, the heart appears to sigh for some dram of re-invigoration from the more stimulating and extraordinary amusements of the world. No medium can suffice. Nature must be put upon her highest mettle; she must run, and leap, and fly, till recreation itself is lost in the toils of the chase. Let the theatre be shut, and, with such individuals, it is as if the entire world of wit, and music, and eloquence, were at an end.

If it should be said, that such remarks are mere colouring; that a medium is admitted; and that the above enumeration of innocent delights must be allowed to be more than sufficient both for variety and intensity; I rejoice at the observation,

and ask, Why, then, is not the theatre expelled from the group, because of its undeniable and monstrous abuses? Would the annihilation of this single pleasure be an irreparable loss? The objector himself replies, "No." On the contrary, I think, this annihilation would be an incalculable gain to the health, and wealth, and character, and domestic comfort of multitudes in different ranks of society. Let common sense, and humanity, and conscience, decide on this one topic of a subject so important.

We gladly allow the candour of the concessions quoted in this essay; but the question is, What is their absolute amount? Do they not prove the existence, in the theatre, of an extended, and organized, and uncorrected, and perpetuated system of immorality? If the stage have its use, let that use be shown by a plain and rational theory, and by the production of tangible facts. Should the system be purified, and rendered serviceable to society, the opposition it receives from the religious world would instantly cease. Let its sting be drawn, and no one would then object occasionally to amuse himself by admiring the beauty of its colours, and the gracefulness of its coil. But till this be effected, the innocent and inexperienced must be warned not to tread within the scene of its deceptive gambols.

It has been said, that "wit and humour are given to man, by a kind Providence, to mitigate the ills of life." What then? May not the same be said of multitudes of sights, and sweets, and scents, and sounds, for the extravagant accumulation, and composition, and public participation of which, no theatres are built? Because the delicacies of the confectioner have their appropriate use and pleasure, must we bring them by waggon-loads into some immense building, and there, assembling by thousands, devour them without measure, to the injury of our health? And all this, too, because a beneficent Providence has supplied them! Finding that it is natural for man to laugh, it would seem, we must, in gratitude to the beneficent Author of this faculty, collect in vast multitudes to laugh in concert for three or four hours together; laugh at impious violations, too, of the sacredness of His name, and at imitated crimes committed against His "just, and good, and holy law." "But all this is so natural." And so it is to sail right before the wind; and to seize, when hunger prompts, the first food that

comes in our way, though, perhaps, it be the property of another as hungry as ourselves.

Sir Walter Scott, in defending the stage, speaks of "those who entertain," he supposes, "a holy horror of the very name of a theatre; and who imagine impiety and blasphemy are inseparable from the drama. We have no room left," he adds, "to argue with such persons; or we might endeavour to prove, that the dramatic art is in itself as capable of being directed either to right or wrong purposes, as the art of printing."*

This sarcastic use of the word "holy," a term of the most awful significance, as the most inattentive glance at the moral perfections, and law, and authority of God will demonstrate, is not in the style of decorum so usual with this admirable writer. Impiety and blasphemy are high degrees of wickedness, and are not unfrequently the crimes of the theatre; but no one, I believe, imagines, that they are necessarily blended with the essence of the drama. It does not, however, follow, that inferior degrees of moral evil are by no means interwoven with the system. We have already seen, that the living exhibition of undeniable rebellion against the Eternal Lawgiver is essential to the existing stage. Whether it be possible to purify the system, is, perhaps, an inquiry which belongs to the *facts* of the case, rather than to abstract and theoretical conceptions of it. Who will point out the period when the drama was in a state of even tolerable purity; when the majority of its pieces, of its doctrines, precepts, maxims, characters, accompanying circumstances, and effects, were substantially good and commendable? To talk of possibilities in a matter of this vast importance, without producing facts, after an experiment of more than two thousand years, is strange indeed!

The allusion to printing ought to be justified by evidence, that the stage is, equally with that inestimable art, essential and important to the interests of society; otherwise, it is of no force, because, supposing the theatre to be capable of renovation, all parties are agreed, that it is actually abused, and abused, as this author himself has shown, to a considerable extent. As to the declaration, "We have no room left to argue with such persons," it may be asked, Are there no common principles on which they may be met? Or, does the author deem them to

* See his "Dissertation on the Drama," at the end.

be so deeply enthusiastic as to banish all hope of succeeding with them in a rational disputation? This is to assume the question; concluding, that he who is decidedly hostile to the theatre must, of course, be in the wrong. I think this shows, that the author himself is the man with whom there is no room to argue.

But had he condescended to make the attempt; and had he added unequivocal and forcible instructions to the body of dramatic managers and actors, successfully teaching them to effect that reformation which he believes to be so practicable, he would then, as I imagine, have done infinitely more to promote the true happiness of mankind, than is likely to be effected by all the poems, and tales, and antiquarian researches he has ever written. These, indeed, have their amusing effect, their chaste and thrilling charm; and, what is more, they have some tendency to embue the public mind with sentiments of genuine loyalty; but, viewing the existence of man as running out into a line of interminable duration,—which unfashionable view, our reason assures us, is the only accurate admeasurement of his being,—I cannot but regret, that this popular and competent writer has not added to his numerous works some tract of unpopular, but of super-eminent importance, for the purpose, if possible, of amending the stage, and of preventing the temporal wretchedness of innumerable families, and the eternal destruction of innumerable souls. But I must stop short. These are sounds which, with many, are too vulgar and too senseless to excite any other feelings than those of disgust and contempt. This author, with his beautiful tales, will, no doubt, remain the unquestioned friend of humanity; for he soothes our ills with sports: This poor essay must expect to be denounced as harsh and misanthropic.

Suppose the stage to be completely reformed, and to continue equally popular, — a thing impossible in a corrupt state of society,—it would, then, in its fundamental principles, be quite another thing, compared with the present theatre: This would not be a reformation, but a substitution of one species of system for another. Yet, were the pieces pure and good, a reference to the scale, I think, would show, that the action, the costume, the obtrusive exhibition of the female figure, the playfulness of manner inseparable from this description of amusement, would be dangerous, and at perfect variance with true Christian feeling.

It does not, indeed, appear, that amusement ought at all to be the subject of expensive public institutions, and of large public assemblies, regularly convened, that they may enter systematically and heartily into the spirit of a jest, or of sensations merely gratifying. This is to lift the thing far above its proper rank in human concerns ; it is like erecting a magnificent college, with its appropriate statues, and its qualified professors, for cultivating the noble art of entering a drawing-room with peculiar grace. In proportion to this elevation will be the decaying influence of institutions of real and indispensable importance,

" But has not the drama its deep and beautiful principles ? Is it not founded in nature, partaking of the genuine character of truth and science ? " It is, no doubt, curious, that, while sympathy in real life has much of pain connected with it, a similar sympathy, produced by fiction, should impart unmingled pleasure. Mr. Hume accounts for this from the predominant impression, an impression made by the perfect oratory of the details, which is extremely delightful, and imparts its own sweetness to such other species of the general feeling as would, separate from this magic, be distressing. But this is a corrupt application of an excellent law of nature. Who sees not, that predominant impressions may be greatly abused ? What right have we to sweeten sin ? It is according to another admirable law of nature, that the cupidity of the miser increases with his years ; for we naturally grasp a valued possession in proportion as we perceive that we are likely soon to lose it. But who would say that covetousness is, therefore, a beautiful science ? Immense mischief may be produced by the grand impression of tragedy. With regard to comedy, as Rousseau has observed, the pleasure of it is usually founded in the vices of the human heart.

The principles, indeed, of dramatic entertainment are evidently drawn from human nature, considered as it is,—fallen and unrenovated,—and not from the same nature as it ought to be, —enlightened and purified by our Divine Christianity. This obvious distinction is a most important key to the structure and tendency of theatrical amusements. An utter ignorance of this subject, among the ancient philosophers, threw a cloud of confusion on their doctrine of ethics and of happiness,—doctrines directly intended for instruction and improvement. What, then, must be the effect of the same unhappy cause in the

formation of a system chiefly designed to amuse, designed to entertain a race of men already bent on pleasure, and, in their moral constitution, essentially corrupt?

Is it likely that a Christian should still pursue the same line of entertainment which used, in his preceding state, to be so perfectly congenial to his corrupt taste and disposition? Is he not now convinced, that moral and religious improvement is a subject of great importance and seriousness; and such, as to several of its branches,—contrition, for instance,—cannot possibly be effected by means which amuse him? Should we even suppose, that, when recreation is required, he can sometimes be diverted by the feats of a mountebank, in which morals are not in any sense discussed; is it probable he would now be charmed with a comedy, in which the principles and details, especially the follies, of human character are shaped and moulded for amusement? Can he look at what he hates for the pleasure of beholding it?

The dramatist must, therefore, plan his art to please a very different class of people. Morals must be treated, and states of mind excited, in accordance with the views and sensitive enjoyments of an unsanctified heart. Let virtue be described and recommended as she ought to be, on her true foundations, in her infinite connexions, and as breathing her own heavenly, but reproachful, sentiments; let her exemplify meekness, patience, humility; and, in her freest and most cheerful moods, something still of the tempering and embuing influence of a noble piety; let all this be effected, with the strictest adaptation to the eternal interests, and not the temporal tastes, of an audience, and our theatres will soon become as empty as, unhappily, our churches are.

Is it urged, that this description of management would be unsuited to a theatre? Then I would beg leave to say, "Let the theatre forbear to touch the hallowed subject." If morals may be handled on the stage with accuracy and propriety, it is, so far, well, extremely well, let plays become as numerous as sermons; but if not, let something else, something less important, and less dangerous, be the subject of amusement. In all cases in which morals are held up to public contemplation, whether we refer to the pulpit, the bar, the senate, or the chair of the philosopher, a certain dignity and gravity, an earnestness and honesty of purpose to advance the interests of truth and happiness, ought

to guide the whole transaction. Nor is the jocund wit of public speakers, as occasionally used, an exception to this decorum; since, here is not the palpability or contagiousness by which the acting of moral evil is manifestly characterized, and since the capital intention is rigorously directed, not to pleasure, but to usefulness.

Still, morality, to some extent, is blended with the drama: In the very worst view of the stage this is fully to be expected. The principles of the art, indeed, could not possibly dispense with it; for, man, when absolutely destitute of Christian piety, is yet possessed of reason, and moral sentiment, and of a certain admiration of what is deemed noble and generous in character and actions. As life and manners are the business of the theatre, some care must be taken to make them pleasing to an audience which, though greatly corrupt, yet consists of moral agents: Let this be neglected, and the stage could not exist at all, and that precisely on the same principle,—that its perfect renovation would destroy its existence in a corrupt state of the people. The auditor is of a mixed nature, and, therefore, the entertainment must employ a corresponding mixture of elements, to touch the varied springs of pleasurable movement, interwoven with his moral system.

Were an audience to consist entirely of murderers, and the most abandoned of wretches, they would still be capable of a certain pleasure through the medium of their moral feeling. Thus thieves applaud justice among themselves, and take a pleasure in detesting and punishing its opposite. Let a couple of savage men tear each other in the street, you will find the moral audience around them rejoicing, not merely in the fray itself, but also in the equity with which the combatants discharge their duty. "Fair play!" resounds from all quarters. The unfair antagonist is denounced, and the generous enemy is loftily extolled with sentiments of equal generosity by the gratified beholders. It is true, justice, as such, ought always to be praised; but is it really improving, in a moral view, to see it despicably employed in regulating a revengeful quarrel, whether of uncultivated boors in actual fight, or of polished and princely villains imitated on the stage? But if there be no improvement, there is abundance of pleasure. He, therefore, who writes a play must not neglect to distribute his precious morsels of morality, according to a profound rule, drawn from

a theory of the sensitive excitement connected with the drama. The greatest villain in the theatre would not endure a piece exhibiting unmingled wickedness. It would shock his reason as improbable; it would shock his conscience as intolerable. We have seen the most cruel, impenitent of murderers acknowledge with gratified feelings the trivial acts of kindness shown to him by strangers. He could, doubtless, have been pleased to witness a dramatic imitation of similar kindness. Some writers for the stage, it would seem, have been too anxious on the score of excitement by means of moral sentiments, and have introduced an excess of this kind of composition; insomuch that Mr. Sheridan found it necessary to satirize the fault, which immediately put an end to it. All this may possibly account, in some degree, for certain rules of the drama, in regard to its morality. Were these views of the subject entirely erroneous, we should expect to find their confutation in the majority of plays, and most certainly in Shakspeare, the most distinguished and voluminous of all dramatic writers. Of this great author Dr. Johnson gives the following severe, but, as I conceive, indisputable, judgment respecting the moral form and bearing of his pieces.

"He sacrifices," says this critic, "virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings, indeed, a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place."*

Our author's conception of a reformed stage may be partly gathered from his remarks, in the "Dissertation," on some popular dramatic pieces. The applause he gives to Mr. Maturin must be founded on "Bertram." And "John Bull" is praised as one of the best and most perfect productions of its kind.

* See Preface to Shakspeare.

Did the limits of this Inquiry permit, it would be easy to show how far these two dramas are from comporting with Christian principles, and with that Christian temper and spirit which ought even to pervade our recreations. We confidently refer the serious observer to make the analysis and comparison for himself. As to the first, what pious mind can fail to be distressed at the gross and infamous suppositions connected with the madness of the heroine, and the villainy of the hero; at the viciousness of its characters, and its outrage on dramatic justice? So much for an imagined reformation of the stage.

It has frequently been urged, with a strange kind of triumph: "Point out a single text of Scripture which expressly prohibits the amusement of the stage?" In our turn we ask, Show us the text that expressly prohibits the negro slavery of the West Indies? Had all the actual shapes and forms in which it is possible for the elemental principles of wickedness to unfold themselves, been distinctly noticed by the inspired writers, the effect would have been weakened; the Bible would have been a work of more immense size than the statute-book of England. But if the spirit and design of the Scriptures, and the inferences which may be rationally deduced from them as premises, are in direct opposition to the existing theatre, it will then be an amusement decidedly unlawful. This is freely conceded by the advocates of the stage. Now, I leave the reader to determine, whether, from experience, observation, and the arguments here offered to the public, it does not appear, that the general strain and temper of theatrical amusements is completely hostile to the holiness, the devotion, the continually subduing sense of the presence and majesty of God, the awful apprehension of eternity, and the extremely sensitive character of the moral conscience; which, Christianity, not only from its precepts, but from the dreadful and momentous grandeur of its arrangements, loudly demands?

This solemn state of the mind will never interfere with the joyous character of legitimate recreation, but will perfectly coincide with it; as the great law of gravitation, while it rests the universe upon its basis, never interrupts the more sprightly exhibitions of light and beauty, as witnessed in the dancing clouds, and in all the varied decorations of a summer scene; but receives them into its own harmonies, and gives them poise and temperance. Let such fundamental laws, however,

be counteracted by some electrical accumulation or vacuum; or by removing the foundations of some massive pile, and they will rise in fearful power to assert their own unalienable sovereignty. Thus let the man who has been in elevated communion with his God, and with the worlds of eternity, come forth from the sanctuary of his retirement. Is he now unfitted for the business of this life? Is he unsuited in his spirit for the banquet, where well-selected guests, of kindred disposition with his own, enjoy

"The feast of reason, and the flow of soul?"

or for any of the numerous enjoyments which God himself has evidently furnished to soothe our passage to the grave? We repel the charge of ascetic sullenness and gloom, and exclaim, "He is not." Let him deliberately pass from the throne of heaven to the theatre, and attend upon the shocking violations of Christian doctrine and piety exhibited; for instance, in "Bertram," or "Pizarro," or the "Stranger," (plays of high popularity, and, consequently, proper specimens of the whole,) and will these two systems of general feeling show no signs of mutual revulsion? of vehement disruption of the one from the other?

Again: Will any one deny, that those great and numerous evils of the theatre, which are specifically acknowledged in the foregoing quotations from its friends, are condemned by the most express letter of the Scriptures? What! is there no text against familiarizing whole audiences with vice; expressing rank obscenity, or, in its absence, the more delicate, but more destructive, double-meaning, before a promiscuous public? &c. &c. The recollection of the reader will furnish him with the remainder of these sad concessions.

VI. OF THE ARGUMENT DRAWN FROM AUTHORITY.

Among great numbers who have recorded to posterity their decided opposition to the stage, as, in its general character, an evil of great magnitude, are the following:—

Of Pagans,—Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Solon, Isocrates, Plutarch, Cicero, Livy, Valerius Maximus, Seneca, Propertius, Ovid, and Tacitus.

Of states and sovereigns,—Themistocles, the Lacedemonians, the Massilians, the Romans, Augustus, Nero, M. A. Antoninus,

Constantine the Great, Julian the Apostate, Theodosius the Great, Valentinian, Gratian, and Valens.

Scipio Nasica, termed "the high priest of Roman virtue," prevailed with the senate to forbid the building of a theatre at Rome, as a corruption from the Greeks, injurious to the ancient morality, and more destructive to the state than Carthage.*

Of Christian councils,—those of Laodicea, Carthage, Eliberis, Arles, Nice, Hippo, Paris, and the Lateran council; as also the synodus Turonensis, the synodus Lingoniensis, and the synod at Rochelle.

Of the Fathers,—Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, St. Cyril, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Isidore, &c.

Of modern Divines, and others,—Archbishops Bradwardine, Parker, Usher, Tillotson, and Secker; Bishops Alley, Babington, Kennet, Andrews, Barclay, Stillingfleet, and Hall; Doctors Reynolds, Griffith, Williams, Elton, Sparks, White, Bond, and Blair; Judge Bulstrode, and Lord Chief Justice Hale; the Rev. Messrs. Venn, Cunningham, Milner, and Gisborne; Mr. Wilberforce, &c. &c. &c.

Such is the phalanx of authorities drawn out against the stage. Now, I challenge the whole theatrical world to produce an equal number of authorities, possessed of equal fame in their respective professions, equally capable of deciding on moral questions; and who have left, on known record, testimonies equally clear and strong, all in favour of that which is the grand point at issue,—the moral tendency of the stage. I will venture to affirm, that no such army, displayed in this precise manner, (and the argument demands this precision,) can possibly be produced.

But I shall be told, that some of these persons have actually written in approbation of the stage. If their writings on this subject contradict themselves, that is not our fault; and the champion of the theatre is at liberty, in drawing up his list of heroes, to take full advantage of this circumstance. The testimonies opposed to the stage are ready to be produced; and pretty strong ones they are, I can assure him, if he knows it not already. He must give me leave, however, to take the

* *De Civit. Dei*, lib. i. cap. 30.

same liberty with his men. For I suspect he will lay a bold claim to Milton, Addison, Johnson, &c. whom we shall find, when considered with due interpretation, to be substantially, though not entirely, on our side of the question.

Milton speaks, indeed, of the moral properties of tragedy; but he expressly confines his panegyric to the tragedy of the ancients. Addison lamented the immorality of the stage; and Dr. Johnson is well known to have expressed, though inconsistently, his abhorrence of the green-room, and his contempt for the players. These great authors were persons of the finest literary taste, which no doubt decoyed them into sentiments of undue attachment to the drama. It is true, they were moralists; but, whether from their printed works, and more especially from their private lives, we may boldly infer, that they possessed a scriptural, profound, and uniform piety, without which every man, be his learning what it may, is so far unqualified to become an authority in favour of the stage, I leave the public to judge. I say "in favour;" because, in opposition, a wicked man may be allowed to judge impartially. It must be a bad thing, indeed, that could offend the moral taste of a Julian, "who," Caussin observes, "hated comedies."* Besides, let the dramatic publications of Johnson, &c. be considered, and I ask, Had all other plays been equally pure in point of morals, what would have been the probable condition of the theatre? What support would it have found? Would it now have had an existence? The "Cato" of Addison, the "Elfrida" of Mason, and, above all, the beautiful fragment, "Ignatius," by Gambold, would soon put a common theatrical audience to flight. We presume the season will never come when either of these pieces shall be rapturously applauded, and their public exhibition demanded for fifty or an hundred nights in succession. I am aware, that, apart from their moral and religious cast, they are not exactly formed for stage-effect. But is it to be imagined, that, in the present state of society, such materials, even in the hands of a Shakspeare, would at all excite a genuine interest in a popular assembly?

It is said that St. Chrysostom used to sleep with the works of Aristophanes under his pillow. But does this neutralize his eloquent opposition to the public acting of such plays?

* See his "Maxims," No. VII.

Must all who read Horace approve of hearing his improprieties pronounced upon a stage before a promiscuous multitude? Nor is the authority of Plato destroyed by his opposition to poetry; for he did not object to it as such, but on moral grounds connected with it. He expressly allows of hymns to the Deity.*

As to the authority of certain persons of eminence in the church of England, who have patronized the stage, I have only to request, that it be fairly balanced with that of others in the same church. If we keep within the limits of eminence in writing, we might confidently boast as to numbers. But when we come to that particular kind of weight which the case requires, I am satisfied the theatrical scale will be found greatly wanting. For instance: Bishops Hurd and Warburton appear, from the general character of their writings, to have made letters their profession; and studies practically religious (I speak merely as to authorship) occupied a very subordinate place in their consideration. On the contrary, Archbishop Tillotson, Bishops Babington, Andrews, and Hall, demonstrate by their works, that to impress religion immediately on the hearts and consciences of men was their profession; and literature, as such, was evidently, with them, an inferior subject of pursuit and of enjoyment. Now, which of these two classes should we choose to be umpire on a point of moral casuistry?

It will again be replied, that the Fathers protested only against the scandalous pantomimes of the Pagans. There was, indeed, a distinction between them and the regular drama; and St. Augustine mentions in one place, that the best and most tolerable of stage-plays were tragedy and comedy, which he calls "poetic fables;" but even to such, under the express names of "poetic fables" and "comedies," he frequently and decidedly objects. Sir Walter Scott allows, that they were subject to the same sweeping condemnation with the public shows, because acted in the same place, and by the same performers. He thinks, however, they were unjustly so condemned. And, certainly, if the regular drama was so innocent and useful as many of the moderns suppose, it is somewhat strange, that neither the Fathers, nor the councils of the church, had the honesty to

* See Vives on *St. Aug.* p. 69.

except them from the general censure. Their perpetual aim was not the reformation but destruction of the theatre. I am inclined to believe that the Christians conscientiously condemned the whole. That they were really condemned, is acknowledged by another great friend of the theatre, who asserts, that the Fathers re-barbarized Europe by their opposition to the stage; which must of course be meant of tragedy and comedy, and not of wicked pantomimes.* St. Cyprian abominates the theatre because of the indecent interchange of the dress of the sexes. And does not this exist on the present stage?

The question comes to this: The Fathers either did or did not condemn the regular drama, as well as the common shows. Let those who assert that they did not, prove the position by plain historic testimoy. If they did, then it only remains for the advocates of the stage to detract, if possible, from the weight of such existing authority.

Is it probable the Fathers would have allowed the modern theatre? And was it not against the regular drama that the Fathers of our British Reformation, from Archbishop Parker downwards, have protested? When such an army of distinguished Christians, the legitimate expounders of the faith, throughout a long line of ages, have strongly opposed the stage, it will be thought good presumptive evidence at least, that Christianity herself is its firm and changeless foe: "Christianity," Sir Walter Scott observes, "from its first origin, was inimical to the institution of the theatre." And such are the men, legislators, philosophers, and Fathers, who, if they lived again to lift up their voice against a theatre, would be denounced as creatures of a weak mind, fanatics, and hypocrites! But we rest not the cause on names. Even Euclid is no infallible authority for the result of a problem, apart from the process by which its truth is worked out. We recur to the arguments which directly relate to the nature and effects of the system.

Suppose there be no Scripture-text, is there not some Scripture-case, plainly applicable to the subject? Let us make the inquiry.

The theatre has given great scandal and offence to a large proportion of the Christian world, for nearly eighteen hundred years. Suppose we allow, that, on this subject, such persons

* See Annual Review on "Styles on the Stage."

have been tinctured with enthusiasm; thousands of them have yet been characters of undeniable talents, and learning, and piety. The friends of the stage, who sometimes blame their opponents for contracted and uncharitable sentiments, it is hoped, will not imitate the bigotry which they themselves condemn, denying the Christian name to all who exclaim against the theatre. Observe, again, that this amusement is not pretended to be essential and indispensable to the happiness of society. Indeed, if it were so, what would become of multitudes of persons who never see a theatre? for instance, the whole of the agricultural classes of this and other countries.

Now, suppose the learned apostle of the Gentiles lived amongst us; and, from an exquisite taste for the beauties of dramatic poetry, should approve of the stage as an innocent amusement; still, what would probably be his sentiments on the subject of offence? Would he who said, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth;"—would he insist on the propriety of continuing the theatre, although it should occasion grief and displeasure to many thousands of his Christian brethren?

But I am told, that this is not the meaning of the case; that by causing a brother to offend, is understood to signify, the occasioning his fall into sin, by means of an example strictly good in itself, though not absolutely necessary; but which, through weakness, he perverts to his own destruction. I admit the interpretation; and will here apply it to the theatre with undemurring confidence.

Now, it is expressly declared by the advocates of the stage, that its evil consequences have arisen chiefly from the peculiar intellectual and moral weakness of individuals. To patronize the drama is to perpetuate such consequences; for persons of this character, attending on the theatre, are by no means few in number. Again: There are multitudes, as has already been observed, who, though they feel convinced that this amusement is dangerous and unlawful, yet allow themselves to be drawn into its vortex, not merely by the attraction of its pleasures, but also by the authority of eminent examples. Thus they attempt at least to lower the voice of conscience. Here, then, though innocence be allowed to the patron, so far as he is conscious that the stage is not in its own nature sinful; it is not always so with the man who fol-

lows in his footsteps. But will it be imagined, that St. Paul, whose feelings were so sensitive on the subject of occasioning the ruin of his weak brethren by the lawful use of flesh, which had been offered to an idol, supposing he asserted the innocence of the theatre, would countenance the stage in person, with the knowledge, that such patronage might be destructive to the souls of thousands; and all to promote his own amusement? Would this accord with his casuistry and example in the case just referred to?

To conclude this topic: For my own part, I am satisfied, that there are several texts of Scripture directly at issue with every thing which bears the unquestioned characters of the existing stage. Of these I will only mention the commencing verses of the first Psalm,* and Ephesians v. 3, 4.†

Let these passages be examined, not as they appear in words, but as severally embodied in the living character, and as deeply imbuing the whole man; and, I doubt not, they will be found completely hostile to the theatre. And if this be denied, because the text does not specify this amusement in particular; I shall expect, in the next place, to find, that the most abandoned sinners are agreed to evade all Scripture-sketches of their own moral likeness, merely because their proper names are not legibly appended to them.

VII. FURTHER REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER AND PRETENSIONS OF THE STAGE—CONCLUSION.

It must be observed, that this discussion relates to the moral question of the theatre, and not to its literature simply considered. The dramatic form of writing, not of acting, may be employed with good effect, as is evident from the splendid productions of Milman. Nor can it be denied, that the ancient drama in particular, is, to some extent, a repository of fine learning and of fine taste; a vehicle of poetic genius of the highest class, and a source of intellectual refinement and pleasure to minds of a certain description. But may not all this be said of

* "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

† "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named amongst you, as becometh saints: Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: But rather giving of thanks."

the Heathen mythology in general? Yet who would rebuild its temples, and act its vile and monstrous mysteries? The sublimities of learning, and the charms of literature, when connected with improper subjects, form a dangerous temptation. Where the moral sensibility of the character is at all obtunded, in the same proportion this temptation will effectually exert the magic of its power. If the depraved mind can sometimes be led to traverse the entire field of sacred truth, merely from the attraction of its intellectual beauties, what mighty force may not be expected to storm the soul, when such attraction is joined with sentiments congenial to every sinful propensity of the heart? Nor can it be surprising, if, in our present state of moral frailty, this bewildering light should occasionally deceive the unwariness of good men themselves. This only proves how seductive are the finer and more unexceptionable pleasures of the theatre. Still the system seems incapable of renovation, at least of such improvement as to render it safe and proper for the populace at large.

It has been judged, that if genteel people will and must have this classical amusement, they ought to have their own private theatres, where, as at the opera, the multitude may be excluded from witnessing such scenes as are too powerful for their minds. In these private theatres people of fashion, it is thought, might still assemble to behold each other; as, with such, *cum dignitate* is frequently the chief joy of the theatre. Who would not sparkle in the box, and vie with the fairest? for birds of spirit always love to sing upon the topmost bough. And there the roarings of a popular audience might be avoided,—an audience which sometimes resembles, not a company of amiable beings, endued with reason and decency, but the monstrous personage of Madness, in the *Hercules Furens* of Euripides, appearing in her aërial car, with a hundred heads, round which hiss a thousand serpents: An amusement this, much to be enjoyed by people of wisdom and taste! Such private theatres, it is true, would be lessening the evil; but would they amount to a perfect cure?

What a shocking picture of the evils connected with the London stage is drawn by Sir Walter Scott, at the close of his "Dissertation!" And what is the language with which he concludes it?—"We notice these evils without pretending to point out the remedy." Alas! for the British theatre, when its

best friends are incompetent to devise a cure for its worst evils! Had a cure been possible, I presume, this chaste and candid writer would have been happy to propose it. He does, indeed, observe, that "the immense size of the London theatres increases the abomination;" but we respectfully refer him to the ratio of the same evils in the smaller theatres, out of London, for proof that the poison is not to be allayed, is only to be resisted by its annihilation. Till this be accomplished, the quantity may be reduced, the quality will always be the same.

If, after all, it shall again be asserted, that "the theatre is the best school for polishing and improving the manners of a people," I cannot but express some wonder, that, supposing this to be correct, it has not received its origin and chief sanction from Divine authority; for, admitting this eulogium, its cast of popularity, in connexion with its moral tendency, lifts it far above the common schools, and, in some respects, above Christianity itself, and many other institutions employed for the improvement of mankind. Though they have been omitted, it would seem, the theatre might have been expected to hold a distinguished place in the appointments and regulations of the sacred Book. But where is the Divine commission for players to set up for public teachers of morality? The honour of this grand invention was reserved for a company of rude peasants, who, sacrificing a goat to Bacchus, sang a drinking-song to his praise,—a song which was occasionally relieved by a talking interlocutor, and the whole set off by the striking faces of the actors, which were besmeared with the lees of wine; hence, according to some critics, τρύγας, "wine-lees," gives name to tragedy; and κωμάζειν, "to be saucy," or "to revel," gives denomination to comedy. I think the Fathers did not reason justly in objecting to the theatre, merely on account of its Heathen origin; because, if the stage were intrinsically good, this could be of no force; but so far as this origin and this denomination serve to point out the nature of the thing, the argument is, no doubt, strongly subversive of the moral pretensions of the drama. There is no trace of the buskin to be found in any part of the Jewish history, before the subjugation of that people by the Romans, as appears from the elaborate work of Lewis on the "Jewish Antiquities."

I also feel surprised at the practice of contemning the profession of a player,—a profession deemed so excellent; I say,

"the profession," for, as to individuals, we shall find some in all situations unworthy of approbation. But, that Christians have agreed to despise the sacred ministry, because it is occasionally tarnished by misconduct, is by no means true in fact; the very indignation and sorrow which they sometimes express at the crimes of a minister are a proof of the contrary. The same crimes in a player excite no surprise, no particular disgust; still the friends of the theatre agree to scowl at the profession. Here is manifest inconsistency. It seems as if immorality in a player were expected to result from his profession; for Voltaire informs us, that "a man, to be a good actor, must have the very devil in him:" Still the profession is asserted to be good, and still it is despised. How the truth eludes us here, like the shiftings of the ghost in Hamlet!—"'T is here!—'T is here! —'T is gone!"

Greece was the principal exception to this general contempt for players, which is thus accounted for by St. Augustine, that "the Greeks happened to look upon them as the servants of the gods, and chiefly for this reason gave them honour." The Romans maintained a different view, and detested them. Sir Walter Scott, however, very properly complains of the evident injustice of allowing and applauding players, and yet despising their profession and their persons. Whether some secret misgivings, as to the professed excellence of the system itself, be not at the bottom of this, we leave to the judgment of the impartial observer.

That the morality of this world—principles of honour, an amiable disposition, and respectability of life and conduct—is sometimes to be found among them, ought not, in candour, to be questioned; but is it not somewhat remarkable, that not a single actor of eminence in piety appears to have existed since the world began? Other professions are not thus barren of the nobler productions of Christianity, as the most effectual means of forming the character to high degrees of excellence. Biography presents us with the lives of soldiers, of lawyers, &c. who have been illustrious ornaments to the Christian name; while we shall absolutely look in vain for a solitary instance of a player, who, supposing him to have felt the renovating power of religion, made it known to the world by those peculiar indications which clearly distinguish it, in every case of eminence, from the godless morality of the infidel.

What player has been seen to copy, in any tolerable degree, the Christian devotedness of Judge Hale? Who has ever been so happy as to read the pious counsels, meditations, and prayers of an actor? What individual of this profession has left behind him the secret diary of his religious life, breathing in every page the delighted fervours of communion with the Deity? Alas! the printer, we fear, is yet unborn from whose press such surprising and unique productions may be expected to emanate. Those gentlemen, if we may judge from their actual publications, are so much accustomed to laugh at the saintship of such works in others, that we can hardly expect them to stoop from the dignity of their more rational and unobtrusive religion to the vulgarity and enthusiasm of either writing or speaking a single word upon the subject. Ah! good souls, and modest! They must aver, with Colonel Lambert, in "the Hypocrite," "We neither of us think it right to make a boast of our religion!"

This dearth of theatrical religion is the more extraordinary, as men of great research, when complaining of their frequent want of success in seeking to discover memoirs of the lives of biblical critics, and others of much worth and fame, have observed, that they were seldom at a loss to meet with the history of celebrated actors.* With the lives of such men, indeed, the literary world abounds.

We may observe, that an advocate of the stage, evidently a person of talents and candour, has just acknowledged to the world, that, "as a whole, the character of our actors is infinitely beyond the morality of our theatre."† Let those lovers of the drama, who have an extensive knowledge of performers, mark well this declaration. It involves a contest to determine, between the professors of the art and the cause itself, which is least immoral and pernicious. Let us reason from the well-known facts of the lives of the actors. Is the system to be preferred? Then how feeble must be its corrective power, when those at the fountain-head of its influence remain, as a body, confirmed, at least, in those kinds of immorality which the doctrine and spirit of the Gospel condemn! And what must be its nature and properties, when multitudes of individuals of well-known wicked habits can

* See the Preface to Townley's "Illustrations of Biblical Literature."

† See "New Monthly Magazine," No. XXXI. p. 32.

take such pleasure in it, and, with the liveliest relish, adopt it as the chief employment of their intellectual powers and life! But if this point must be determined in favour of the professors, I ask, in the name of wonder, What, then, must the system be?

It is observable, that when a player becomes indisputably pious, and forsakes his former evil courses, he instantly abandons his profession. To say that this alone proves him to be an arrant enthusiast, not only wears the colour of illiberality; it also assumes the question as already settled, and as indeed itself a fixed principle on which the theatre may be boldly defended. This may be dispatch in argument, but is it logic?

I wonder at another thing, and it is this,—that, with all the magnified importance of the theatre, as a moral institution, we never see, in books on education, any directions to send a loose and disobedient youth, or a proud or unchaste daughter, to the play-house, as a school of reformation. Nor do we hear from the lips of the aged and the experienced, (I refer to the friends of the theatre,) the smallest counsel to this effect. Let those split this hair who can.

I will now relieve the reader from the tedium of this essay, and plead for its length the extent and importance of the subject. In the attempt to omit no essential consideration belonging to a controversy on which many volumes have been written, it will not be surprising if, to persons unacquainted with this copiousness, the argument has seemed to be lengthened out beyond the necessities of the case. Others, I doubt not, will deem the whole to be sufficiently concise.

The friends of the theatre will, perhaps, be under no alarm at the tactics here employed. We have assailed them, it is hoped, by the weapons of reason; they, however, lie intrenched in the stronger holds of passion. Some inquire not respecting any rational or moral ground of attachment to the theatre; and, refusing to dispute the question, give rein to their propensities, regardless of the consequences. Others struggle for a time in argument, hopeful of a conquest, and close with the free avowal of their fixed fondness for the drama: And what reply can be made to him who, collecting his whole strength, by one grand burst of resistance, confounds you with, "I like it?"

Yet all are not so insensible to the mandates of reason; and if only one parental pair should be reclaimed from their

love of this dangerous pastime, by means of the arguments now offered to the public, the good effects even of this partial reformation may be felt in the line of such a family for ages to come. A result like this, though much beneath the notice of his opponents, would be a noble satisfaction to the writer, who indeed is happy to learn that already this attempt has produced in some quarters a salutary impression.

It is not pretended, that these pages are exempt from fault. Should any zealous friend of the stage deem it worth his while to examine them, and to grasp at minor imperfections with the keenness and minuteness of a special pleader, no doubt this work will be a quarry full to his purpose. Still, no failure, it is hoped, will prove to be capital, and ruinous to the cause which is meant to be supported. The reasons in some instances may have their weaker parts; but, I throw myself into the centre of their collective strength; and if, on the approach of the foe, the whole should give way, still I shall fall without shame, and in the cause, too, of my country, being entirely conscious of the rectitude of my purposes.

I would anxiously attempt, borne out by the principles adduced in this discussion, to rouse my beloved countrymen to a deeper abhorrence of an evil, which is, as I conceive, incalculably mischievous to the morals of society. I would use the whole force of a legitimate and fearless influence in opposition to its destructive sway. I would call on British parents, by the tenderest yearnings of their affectionate solicitudes, and by the infinite importance of conferring an untainted education on the imperishable minds of their offspring, the culpable neglect of which is a cruelty not equalled by that of such mothers of antiquity as threw their children into a quenchable fire to Moloch;—I would call on persons of rank and opulence, by the awful responsibility of their situation, providentially designed to give shape and tone to the morals of multitudes below them; on the magistrates of the land, by the inestimable consequence of their personal example, even where they cannot legally exterminate an evil; on the sacred ministers of religion, by the sanctity of their office, which binds them to oppose the whole breadth of its authority and power against every system which stands, like that of the theatre, so confessedly the pander of iniquity:—On all these highly-valued and respected classes of our extended and endeared population I would call, as

with the voice of a trumpet; beseeching them to revive in their minds a burning sense of the domestic and national—but, above all, of the eternal—importance of the subject; and animating them to summon their respective forces to the field, and to fight against this citadel of vice with persevering unanimity and energy, till, by the help and benediction of Omnipotence, its foundations should tremble at their resistless attacks, and angels respond to shouts of victory mingling with the crash of its final demolition.

THE SUBSTANCE

OF

AN ARGUMENT

TO PROVE

THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE:

DRAWN FROM

THE FITNESS AND HARMONY OF ITS SUBJECTS.

"He that would not deceive himself ought to build his hypothesis on matter of fact, and make it out by sensible experience; and not presume on matter of fact because of his hypothesis."

LOCKE.

SHORT as it is, it is full of excellent matter, and can scarcely fail of putting its readers into a very profitable train of thought.—For myself, I can say, it belongs to a department of evidence by far the most satisfactory of all; and, indeed, in my opinion, unanswerable.

REV. J. J. BLUNT, A. M. *St. John's College, Cambridge.*

YOUR admirable work most certainly places you in a very high rank as an author. The view you have taken of the subject is most just, though difficult, and yet the difficulty you have surmounted. The reasoning is abstruse, but your illustrations are easy, elegant, and appropriate.

REV. S. T. STURTEVANT, *Author of the "Preacher's Manual," &c.*

PREFACE.

It could not escape the notice of many able writers on the evidences of Christianity, that while revelation never stoops to affect the show of systematical arrangement, yet it every where presents the materials of a noble and consistent plan.

They must have equally discovered the fitness of this design to complete the purposes of nature; and as forming, with it, one grand and universal scheme;—a scheme ever working onward to perfection, solely in consequence of this union; the latter being entirely corrected and elevated by the influence of the former, which is always, and without exception, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

The Book itself would also exhibit, with all its informality, the simple and natural coherence of a genuine record. Nor could they fail to observe with wonder, how these three general views include a most extensive intermixture, and mutual relationship, among the singular variety of parts which form the whole.

Still, this subject does not appear to have received, from these celebrated writers, that full and close attention which its value, as furnishing a powerful evidence of the truth of Scripture, seems to demand. They have written, it is true, many admirable works on the excellence of Christianity, as calculated to promote the entire improvement of mankind; and supported their opinions by unquestionable details of its effects; yet not with reference to the mechanism of the universal system. At other times they have glanced at this general contrivance, and pointed out some instances, as illustrations of the principle; but these they have usually left to work their own way on the intuitive perception and candour of the reader.

The Christian public have cause to regret, that those instances

have not been multiplied, and analyzed, by such distinguished talents, with a view to a complete inquiry. The subject would then have assumed the attitude and power of a commanding argument. The writer of the ensuing essay would sincerely rejoice, if the imperfect hints which it contains should induce some competent defender of the Christian religion to follow up this very important design.

He has used the title "Substance of an Argument," because principles of examination are advanced, which, from the limits of the work, could not be regularly applied; while others of equal value are not mentioned at all; and, also, because those instances of application which he has ventured to produce are capable of being carried to a much greater extent.

He is not, however, willing to concede, that the question yet remains undetermined. Sufficient proof, he thinks, has been adduced to convince any sceptic, somewhat open to conviction, of the truth of the Bible; though much more lies reserved in the inexhaustible resources of the subject. But of this the reader must judge for himself.

It could, perhaps, be made to appear, that all the different kinds of proof which, by numerous and able advocates, have been brought forward in support of revelation, might be turned to bear with advantage on this single topic of fitness and harmony; forming one concentrated and powerful body of evidence, rendered regular and interesting by the unity preserved throughout. For example: The rapid propagation of the Gospel in primitive times presumes the intrinsic suitableness of the Christian system to produce such effects; as well as a special arrangement of Providence, and an extraordinary measure of Divine influence, in favour of the cause. Most subjects, it is well known, present this variety of aspects; as trees in a forest may be viewed either with respect to their admeasurement, or usefulness, or beauty.

The writer may just be allowed to add, that what is here, with some diffidence, committed to public attention, was originally a brief letter to a friend; and that after it was noticed

as about to be printed, he hastily complied with the request to enlarge it. He soon found, however, that to draw up the greater part of an argument of this nature, while the work was going through the press, involved more of difficulty than he had suspected. This may account for some imperfections which otherwise, perhaps, had not existed. Still he casts himself on the candour and indulgence of the reader; hoping that any faults in the execution of his work may be extenuated by the sincerity of his intentions.

One special favour he would earnestly solicit from the sceptic who may condescend to look at the following pages;—a request suggested by the nature of the investigation;—namely, that he would be pleased to judge of the subject, not from a simple glance at some remarks seen unconnected with the rest, but from an attentive survey and minute examination of the whole.

As to the private Christian, who is usually in quest of what is spiritually edifying, it is not pleasant to reflect, how little there is in the following inquiry immediately adapted to promote so good a purpose. But the prejudices of the infidel, for whom such writings are chiefly intended, are so various, and withal so tenacious, as to oblige the friends of revelation to have recourse to every possible kind of argument, that "by all means" they may "save some."

SLOANE-SQUARE, CHELSEA,
March 20th, 1827.

AN ARGUMENT,

&c.

I. THE KIND OF PROOF EMPLOYED.

When a great and comprehensive principle in science is discovered, each successive instance of its proper application serves only to confirm its truth, and to illustrate its importance. In the progress of experiment, and of rational induction, its uses may be found, perhaps, to be far more numerous, and far more valuable, than could possibly have been contemplated by the mind which first perceived it. For example: We may name the law of gravitation, as demonstrated by Newton. Here the truth of the principle is ascertained, not merely by the evidence of mathematics, but also by the past and continued history of its operation. The varied and innumerable facts of the history, answering so exactly to the principle, would exclude all doubt from the mind of any one, who might not, indeed, have noticed the direct proof advanced by that eminent philosopher.

If in moral science a principle should be advanced, professing to improve the character and happiness of man incomparably beyond what had been previously known; and should these pretensions be supported, not indeed by the certainty of strict demonstration, but by such kind of proof as the nature of the subject might admit; and should observation of its actual efficacy, and a rational conviction of its applicability in all imaginable cases, confirm our first thinkings on the question; what would be thought of the scepticism that should obstinately contemn this evidence? Such a principle, we conceive, is found in the grand doctrines, duties, and discoveries, which are deemed to be peculiar to Divine Revelation; in the nature of each, whether separately examined, or as bearing some important

relation to the rest; and in the structure and ultimate intentions of the whole.

An intrinsic excellence of the parts, we may observe, would lead to the expectation of their harmony, as joint divisions of one great system. The previous question is, however, to ascertain the truth and features of this excellence. This, we hope, may be done with satisfaction to the candid inquirer, by supposing its existence, and then tracing its admitted properties and consequences, to learn whether they agree with the nature of man, and with the circumstances and relations in which the Christian scheme avows him to be placed, and, consequently, whether this religion be, at least, consistent with itself.

But even should we allow the infidel to fix what is the actual constitution and condition of mankind; and should we ascertain, that the discoveries of the Scriptures are precisely applicable to this admitted state of things; the argument would thus be considerably strengthened.

He may, perhaps, object entirely to this kind of evidence: "A very convenient way, indeed," he exclaims, "to solve a difficulty! We have only to suppose some delusive scheme or theory, and thence leap at once to the conclusion—that it must be true!"

In reply, it may be said, Is it not this sort of proof that infidels themselves are constantly adopting and perverting? Is not this the principle of their professed reasonings against the miracles and other subjects of the Book which we deem to be inspired? Are they not accustomed to tear some Scripture-fact or sentiment from its proper connexion with the cause or the effect, and then apply it to some partial or fancied constitution of nature,—to such a state of things as they imagine ought to exist,—or to the actual substances and laws of nature, in a manner quite irrelevant; asserting, for instance, that the throat of the whale was too strait for Jonah; till, in the hasty judgment of the unwary, the ritual, or doctrine, or narrative in question appears quite ridiculous?

We advert not to this, of course, with any view to object to our own principle of reasoning from a supposition,—a principle which has always been allowed to be legitimate; we simply suggest, that a line distinguishes its use from its misapplication.

In the analytical sciences—instance, in algebra—we proceed

from a known quantity, by a process of conclusions, till we arrive at some wished-for, but unknown, quantity. Yet here the unknown quantity is, in some sense, already known, by a certain anticipation, and has a proper character assigned to it; is considered in its relations to various other quantities, till, at last, the expected truth breaks upon the mind with full evidence and lustre. Thus a logical assumption is also founded on certain probabilities, which are instantly felt to possess some weight, both as a ground, and as an instrument, of inquiry. It is, therefore, not a mere fancy, as the objection supposes. We will give an explanation.

In infancy, for example, the teeth are withheld, because it is obvious, they would serve no useful purpose, but would rather be injurious. Subsequently, however, their use becomes apparent; and it would be fair for a person, whom we shall suppose never to have known that there were such parts of the human frame as teeth, to reason from the appearances, and fitnesses, and necessities of the case, that they would soon be supplied; or, to suppose the form, and character, and number of the teeth; and then to apply this theory to existing circumstances: As an artist, in working, first tries one instrument, and then another, and another, till he meets with one precisely adapted to his purpose. With our present knowledge of the teeth, we are sure that this would be a very successful instance of reasoning. But should we attempt, by supposition, to add a new faculty of body or mind, to the complete constitution of man, or to add a new planet to the solar system, or to introduce a new species of animals amongst the kinds which now exist, the absurdity of the scheme would increase at every step of our procedure.

We mean not to insinuate, that nature could not possibly admit of these additions; very probably she might, for aught any man living can know to the contrary. But we do not mean to assert, that, supposing them to be theoretically practicable, no human ingenuity could possibly invent them. Let the strongest mind call up its powers to the task, and the planet will be misplaced, the faculty excrescent, and the animal a monster. But should some higher intelligence, or should man himself, were he capable of this vast reach of mind, present us with the true invention; then, indeed, but not till then, the more we searched into the principles and bearings of the tangible arrangements, the

more clearly we should ascertain the uses of the whole, and its just and beautiful accordance with the general system into which it had been interweaved.

In like manner, we will fearlessly aver, that no man, or number of men, on earth could have invented the great scheme of revelation. If we say nothing of its truth, yet its extreme originality, (for it has—itself without a model—been the perverted platform of all corrupt religions,) and the unexampled multitude and grandeur of its details, must have rendered this impossible. But now, when we are told that it is no fiction,—that it is, indeed, the invention of an infinite Intelligence,—and intended, not for idle speculation, but for practical purposes, it is the duty of men to examine whether it coalesces with the existing machinery of nature. If it be nothing but a dream or falsehood, the monstrosity at once of its character and pretensions will glare upon the observant mind at every experiment. If, however, it really answers to nature, the harmony of both with each other, through all their multifarious counterparts, will break forth like the sun from a cloud at noon-day. And this is precisely the principle of argumentation, which it is the chief design of this essay to point out and recommend, rather than to prosecute by a nice and lengthened application.

This principle of proof is as legitimate as that of poetical invention, by which we form ideas of a more perfect and beautiful world than the present, with no tempestuous seas, burning sands, and horrid caverns; and by which we sometimes draw a character beyond the measurement of real life, yet obviously true to nature.

The objection, therefore, seems to have no force. The suppositions of our argument are warranted by the clearest intimations. For example: Is the Scripture-doctrine of repentance the subject to be tested? It is evident, apart from all religious considerations, that men are often faulty, that they ought to be sorry for it, and, in many cases, candidly to acknowledge it. This is the uniform sense of mankind, and demanded, if even he were a deist, by the pistol of the duellist. This leads us to the notion of a perfect repentance, while the fact is evident, that contrition is often seen to be ineffectual, or altogether wanting. But in Scripture a peculiar species of this virtue is enjoined. Here it is professed to be sanctioned by the most powerful motives, to be assisted by supernatural inspirations,

and thus to be formed to a character the most complete and sanative. And all that is transcendent in the case is as manifestly suited to the nature and condition of the sinner, and as just in itself, as is the ordinary penitence which the deist expects from any one who commits a crime.

It is hoped the reader now perceives, that this mode of argumentation need not be confined to a fanciful supposition, and the starting of the mind to a hasty conclusion.

II. METHOD OF THIS REASONING AS APPLIED TO THE PRESENT QUESTION.

The transcendent excellence of revelation would be readily allowed, and, by consequence, its truth admitted, were evidence adduced to show its vast usefulness;—that it amply provides the proper means of accomplishing the present improvement, and ultimate perfection and happiness, of mankind. And this provision, we conceive, it does hold forth, with an evidence which ought more fully to determine our acceptance of the gift, than the allowed probabilities of health, connected with the unquestioned prescription of an accredited physician, are expected to determine us to act upon its dictates.

The adaptation of the scheme of Scripture to effect these great designs could not be perfectly ascertained without a perfect knowledge, not only of the scheme itself, but of the system of nature for which it is intended. This knowledge is, however, unattainable in the present life. One rapturous employment of eternity, perhaps, will consist in the ever-deepening contemplation of this astonishing subject. Yet enough may now be known to prove, that revelation bears as striking characters of noble and beneficent design, as are every where displayed in the frame of the visible world.

We would affectionately entreat the sceptical reader to familiarize himself with the Scriptures throughout, for the purpose of acquiring the necessary grounds of this argument; else how should he be capable of knowing the actual characters of the scheme, and of judging whether it be suited to its design? In this careful and comprehensive survey, he will also, probably, be saved from yielding to the common fallacy of judging from a part,—seemingly incongruous,—against a whole; and against reserved proofs, which prejudice, of course, would refuse to examine.

The very incongruity, so called, may be found to be an instance of admirable propriety. A rash critic, in the near examination of some statue which ornaments a cathedral, blames it as unshapely and extragavant; but a view from the proper distance would, perhaps, have smoothed it into beauty, and shown its perfect accordance with the body of the building; —a proof, in fact, of the excellent taste and judgment of the architect.

Thus, in the Mosaic institutes, it is commanded not to seethe a kid in its mother's milk. "Ridiculous!" exclaims the infidel. "What a pitiful instance of Divine legislation!" And all that is more obviously excellent in that economy, is sunk in the ignorant triumph over this one precept. "Ignorant," we say, because he ought to know, that the practice referred to was a magical rite of Pagan origin, and tended to idolatry. The precept, therefore, was highly moral and religious.

With a proper knowledge, then, of the details of the question, let him proceed to examine their more latent characters and connexions. But here a difficulty rises to obstruct our path. It will be said, that the whole is mere matter of opinion;—that while one sees a fitness in any given portion of the Bible, to promote a certain end, another, of equal penetration, discerns just the contrary.

The same evidence, no doubt, will not equally affect the several minds who may examine it, nor equally, at all times, the same individual. And some persons are much more convinced, by certain kinds of evidence, than by other kinds, which are frequently admitted as still stronger. Nay, perhaps, some persons are so strangely constituted, as to pronounce a strict demonstration as only matter of opinion. Is there then no test of truth? no means of producing a rational and steadfast conviction in the minds of men in general?

It is true, that in the analysis of a watch, for example, we need no rules to guide us to the conclusion. We instantaneously perceive the fitness of the wheels, and of all the other portions, for the purposes of the machine. In moral subjects it is somewhat different. The relations are not always so clearly discernible. Nor, when most obvious, are they in all cases perceived to be complete. We say "perceived," because, though a full conviction may be felt of this completeness, still the whole extent of the case is not open to inspection. The

relations are, so to speak, not seen to touch in all points. But perfect exactness in the reasoning is not necessary. It is sufficient that the great masses of the subject stand out to view in general proportions. The definitions in geometry are not absolutely true. Nor in working, can a perfectly straight line be obtained. Yet this does not invalidate the accuracy of the operation. In like manner we must plead, that the want of extreme closeness in the present argument be not considered as, by any means, fatal to its issue.

There are, however, some general rules to be observed in attempting a partial analysis of the great plan of redemption, by which we may with good satisfaction determine the grand and leading relations of the case. On these rules we will venture a few observations.

The particulars which compose the universality of things; the parts and principles of the physical world; powers of mind; ideas, and emotions; verbal propositions, whether true or false, including those of a God, revelation, and Divine influence in man; and every other existence, real and imaginary, may be subjected, in thought, to endless combinations, presenting to the mind an infinite variety of contrasts, adaptations, and harmonies; discrepancies, discordancies, absurdities, and conflicts.

Is man, thus placed, incapable of finding his way through the labyrinth? Is he born under the absolute necessity of erring fatally, and for ever? Is there no redeeming principle to be found in any class of this immense multitude of things? Or, if such a principle exist, may it not be expected to unfold itself to the diligent examination of every candid inquirer?

But where, in the above enumeration, shall we find it? Not in nature, not in reason. These are themselves perverted, and stand in need of renovation from some other and superior power. They have filled the earth with impiety, and invented a vast multitude of religions, the most absurd, and wicked, and conflicting. Yet each pretends to truth, and a supernatural origin. Now we may fairly conclude, that all these, if untrue, will be clearly unsupported by any proper testimony to their truth and authority; and totally unsuited to harmonize with the universal system; and irrelevant to answer the capital designs of a genuine scheme of religion. There is abundant proof of this in the history of such systems. None is asked

by the deist. His own opinions are as opposite to the religions of mankind in general, as they are to the Christian religion in particular. They must, therefore, be classed amongst those wild and hurtful fancies of the mind for which no prototype is found in truth, and the just demands of nature.

But the principle in question is avowedly contained in a Book, which calls itself "divine." In the light of either truth or fiction, this is the most extraordinary volume the world ever saw: The immense extent, and variety, and singular character of its conceptions must, if false, furnish the most ample means of detection; especially as it boldly demands the most severe test of its pretensions,—that of both actual and hypothetical experiment, most rigidly examined. Thus, it may be tried upon a scale, in myriads of its instances; and it risks its reputation on the joint result of the whole. The details of this Book, then, may be judged by their relation to each other, and to whatever exists besides, both in fact and in fancy.

All relations are either proper or improper. Things may be said to be related simply as existences and numbers; and in this respect, an unit stands in the relation of one to all the myriads of units which compose the universe. This, for the sake of distinction, may be termed, "an improper relation." But *one* does not stand in the relation of *two* to all the rest. This is an impossible relation, and exists merely as an untruth in the train of our ideas. There are also relations of utility,—things jointly contributing to certain requisite and useful purposes,—agreeably to an express arrangement of some regulating mind. If a burning coal be thrown into the sea to quench it, the combination is a proper one, for it answers its intention. But should we flood a fire with water to increase the flame, the relation or connexion between these substances would neither be one of truth, nor of usefulness. It would be what we have called "improper;" the materials standing, indeed, in a true relation to each other, simply as numbers; but just as one part of an absurdity is related to the other. A *proper* relation, then, is a relation of truth, or of utility. Whether those resulting from the contents of the Bible be of this description, or merely improper, is the point now at issue.

Here the question forcibly recurs, "By what means shall I determine the character of such relations as come under my

notice; and on which, if I act with candour and caution, I may be supposed quite competent to decide?" Of these means we may specify experience; intuition, or common sense, which Dr. Beattie has shown is frequently the ultimate test of truth; and rational or moral calculation.

The analysis of subjects requires, as already stated, that the whole, and the parts, be viewed, as far as practicable, in all their aspects and bearings, their causes and consequences, and in every other light of explanation which can possibly be thrown upon them. By what other means, in this extreme diversity, than by those just mentioned, can we judge of their contrivance and consistency? "Experience," Locke observes, "is by far the best demonstration." It is, in fact, the great principle of the inductive philosophy, which has been so successfully applied, not only to matter, but also to mind. The same great author prefers intuition to the clearest demonstration, because its evidence is brighter and more concentrated; demonstration itself depending on it, yet requiring a succession of steps, which slightly tends, as he conceives, to dim the argument. As to calculation, that must be regulated by such principles and qualifying considerations, as must themselves, in regard to their propriety, be subject to the judgment of the mind, when properly examined.

The whole of these three several tests may sometimes be applied successively to the same relation. It is said, for instance, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" This truth is clearly seen and allowed, the moment it is mentioned. It is also matter of unquestionable experience. And we may add, it is a subject for moral calculation, as a final cause of the social affections, as consonant to the improved state of civilized society, and as the exact contrary of what is horrible in the extreme.

This converse of the proposition may itself be determined by a similar calculation. For should it be asserted, "'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren' to cut each other's throats, from cruelty and revenge!" it would be evident at once, that this is contrary, not only to experience and our natural notions of propriety, but also to public laws, and the well-being, and even existence, of mankind.

If, then, among the multiplied relations involved in the scheme of Scripture, we find a certain number, fairly deter-

minable as true or good; that is, just and proper combinations, or useful adaptations; it will then obviously follow, that the Book is not a fiction: For these may, from their own intrinsic character and bearing, prove the truth of all the others that remain to be known and ascertained. What, for instance, would prove the sincerity and competency of the writers,—supposing this proof possible,—would of course demonstrate the truth of their general testimony. A certain number of relations would likewise, merely from their numerical weight, as implying super-human design and contrivance, prove the truth of the Book; and then all the rest, though unexamined, must be true. Nor is this reasoning in a circle. For though we thus prove the Book by the relations, and then the relations by the Book, still they are not the same relations in both parts of the process, but a totally different class in each.

In subjecting the Scriptures to this species of trial, neither experience, nor intuition, nor calculation, must be used incautiously. Other views must regulate and modify this use. A few of these will here deserve at least some transient notice.

It is evident, that, in pursuing this inquiry, such things only ought to be considered in relation to each other, as from their several natures may seem to warrant the association. To ascertain the fitness of a doctrine or precept, it would be folly to contrast it with a river or a mountain. Here, indeed, there would not be, what might properly be deemed, either a discrepance or a contradiction; and should the deist choose to attempt the interminable round of similar combinations, in order to demonstrate some absurdity in the sentiments of the Bible, we firmly believe he would altogether fail to accomplish his purpose. But in the instances just mentioned, there appears nothing feasible, no probable grounds of any proper relationship.

The doctrine, for example, must be examined with reference to the perfections of God; and our relation to him as his creatures, and the objects of his care; and with a view to learn, whether it accords with all the other doctrines, and with the fundamental facts, included in the scheme? We must look into its component parts and principles, to know if they consist with each other. We must inquire, What are the truths, or absurdities, resulting from it? and, should conflicts appear, whether we can reconcile them; or whether they be of sufficient

weight to deprive the other instances of agreement of their whole force? We must ask, What is the probable tendency, and what may be the results, of this doctrine, when practically realized? These, and similar questions, are rational, and may lead to important discoveries. Other subjects demand the same consistency of investigation.

The deist, therefore, ought to observe, that, in order to the proof which we wish to establish, it is not necessary to find a meditated harmony, or an instance of utility, in every imaginable combination of the details. The only thing indispensably required, in all the changes which might be produced, by way of experiment, is, that there be no real and undeniable discordance among them. The parts may have, perhaps, a mere numerical alliance with each other; but they must include, in a full view of all, as they modify and expound each other, no false or impossible relation, like that of *one* standing in the relation of *two* to any other number.

I say, "a full view of all;" for of this subject we must judge from extended considerations, including the principal parts and general characters of the whole; otherwise the mind may refuse to admit the miracles, and prophecies, and some of the more mysterious doctrines, of the Bible. And this is another regulating view, as referred to above. Should we single out some case from these, and compare its parts with each other, we might deem it to be false, as quite beyond our comprehension, and the common experience of mankind. But let us view this whole case as itself a part of another more essential and comprehensive relation,—like the architectural ornaments already mentioned,—and the agreement will be obvious. Let prophecy, for instance, be considered in connexion with the attributes of God, with the nature and design of a supernatural revelation, and all will seem proportionate and proper. Still, the apparent impossibility of the limited and insulated case is only analogous to certain difficulties which we meet with in the natural world. What conflicting theories have been offered to explain the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights! Nay, it seems quite opposed to reason, that a magnet should impart its virtue to ten thousand bars of iron, without at all diminishing its magnetic power. Yet these are cases which we are sure exist, and are perfectly accordant with the system of nature.

We must also judge of moral relations, according to the

character and office of the moral agent. If there were no differences in this respect, the entire class of obligations which belong to a prince would equally fall on the peasant. What morally belongs to man does not always belong to God. It is our duty, for instance, as far as possible, to prevent and destroy moral evil. But He who has all power permits its existence; and we are sure that this is perfectly consistent with his holiness. It would be wrong for us, however, to plead this as our example for allowing what is criminal.

On the contrary, what morally belongs to God does not always belong to us. He determined and predicted the destruction of the Roman power; and nothing, therefore,—admitting its continued corruption,—could prevent the accomplishment of that fatal purpose. In the course of its decline, its statesmen devised measures for its recovery, which only hastened its downfall. Now, suppose they had known that such was the decree of Heaven, would it then have been their duty to accelerate, in every possible way, the total ruin of their country? Certainly not. A proof that we must judge of moral relations by some rule, which determines who, and what, and where, is the moral agent.

But this rule leads us further to explain the difficult relations just adverted to; for may we not presume, that equal differences with those mentioned above exist between the infinite understanding of the Divine Mind, and the narrow and feeble conception of man? Though I cannot comprehend how it is, that, in the unity of the Godhead, there should be three distinct persons; must I therefore have the boldness to assert, that the thing is quite impossible? and that it is as impossible he should himself comprehend it, or reconcile it to the rule and order of his own eternal wisdom? It is not only above my reason, but perfectly at variance with it, that God should make something out of nothing; yet the fact of creation makes the consistency of the proposition absolutely certain.

Mr. Locke, with all his excessive dependence on reason as a judge of revelation, admits the greatest difficulties, nay, positive contradictions, as far as we can discern, contained in certain undeniable truths. "There is nothing," he observes, "more perplexed, or nearer a contradiction, than the very notion of body includes in it; the divisibility, *in infinitum*, of any finite extension, involving us, whether we grant or deny it,

in consequences impossible to be explicated, or made in our apprehensions consistent; consequences that carry greater difficulty, and more apparent absurdity, than any thing can follow from the notion of an immaterial knowing substance." To our apprehensions, then, according to this passage, these consequences are inconsistent, or a positive contradiction.

This author is a great authority. But the perplexity itself he did not enter upon. The following, however, may be specified as one of the difficulties. If matter be divisible, *in infinitum*, then an inch of surface contains an infinite number of parts. Yet, in an instant, I can pass my finger over the whole of them. But the motion over each of these parts must require some point of time. Therefore, an infinity of such points, that is, an eternity, may be included in a moment! Must we, then, deny all motion?

The greatest philosophers might be confounded by this very instance. A true sceptic may, perhaps, be obtained, who would kindly offer to relieve their embarrassment, by affirming, that not a single truth is advanced, in the whole of this reasoning; which, of course, would involve the greatest absurdity of all.

These observations are designed to show, that, in the scheme of Scripture, difficulties connected with particular facts and sentiments, singly considered, do not invalidate the force of the relations which subsist among the great and leading portions of the whole. That extraordinary difficulties should occasionally appear in a work divinely inspired, and which treats of supernatural and eternal subjects, is only what might be reasonably expected; and forms, in fact, a presumption in favour of the Bible. But such extreme cases are by no means numerous; and the great and practical relations are happily more obvious than others which, in some respects, are merely notional. All men know the adaptation of bread to nourish life; few, the chemical principles and properties of its composition.

Much useful, though reflected, light, in regard to the fitness between nature and revelation, may also be obtained by a connected series of steady and discriminating comparisons of the one with the other.

On any subject, or branch of a subject, we may first inquire, What are the facts and suggestions of nature respecting it? Let us, then, refer to the same topic, as treated by the inspired

writers, to learn, whether this obvious state of things be confirmed by their writings, and whether they have furnished any fresh information as to its principles or history? As a third step of our procedure, let us, with this added light, go back to nature, and examine, whether she may not possess what corresponds to these discoveries, and of course supports them; but which, without revelation, must have been impervious to our keenest eye, though now it is clearly capable of other proof than that of Divine authority. With this accumulated evidence, we may finally return to the Scriptures, and judge, whether the facts and principles, thus explained, first by their own light, and then by that derived from the Book, do not, so far as may be traced, exactly correspond with every other part, not only of the scheme of the Bible, but of the universal system.

Will it not then be fair, on the ground of this agreement of the parts, to infer the truth of the Book, even as to those instances of fitness which cannot thus be traced?

Let murder, for example, be the subject of inquiry on the plan just mentioned. We know that men often kill each other without a proper reason. This is quite opposed to the dictates of every well-regulated mind. That it is wrong, we might infer from the value we set on our own life; from the instinctive law of self-preservation; from natural conscience; and from the manifest scope and design of our appetites, and passions, and avocations, rightly employed. Thus, we are prepared and directed, by the glimmerings of nature, to receive the more decisive light of revelation.

In examining the Book, we find these dictates are confirmed in the command, "Thou shalt not kill." But now the subject assumes new dimensions, and characters of the highest importance. The prohibition is said to come directly from the mouth of God. This ought to strike upon the mind more forcibly than the shadowy and inferential intimations of nature. Revelation adds, to confirm the command, that man is "made in the image of God." It also forbids revenge, with all its kindred states of passion. It enjoins universal love, on grounds the most indisputable; and inspires it by the energy with which the general system of religion is impressed upon the heart. And, to complete its sanctions, it announces the awful and irrevocable decree, that "no murderer hath eternal life."

If we now go back to nature, we find, not only that her

first suggestions on the subject are in perfect correspondence with the sentiments of the Scripture, but that she offers nothing to condemn the additional information presented to her. On the contrary, she perceives it is exactly suited to her wants. To this she owes such a knowledge of her own ignorance and weakness, in regard to murder, as otherwise could not have been obtained; while, from the same Divine source of intelligence, she derives the wisdom and virtue necessary to her preservation. Reason admits the great value and authority of what is thus appended to the comparative nakedness of nature. Thus the real enormity of the evil is determined; improved regulations are enacted to prevent it; and the well-being of society more effectually secured. In consequence of this, even a character of mercy has been infused into war,—a character unknown to nations unacquainted with the Gospel. It is our happiness in this, as in many other respects, that, according to Granville Sharpe, the two great foundations of the laws of England are natural justice, and the Holy Scriptures.

We then conclude, that the Book which contains such rational and valuable sentiments is, so far at least, altogether worthy of God to give to his creatures, and of man to receive as from the hand of his Maker. No savage—no mere philosopher, indeed—was ever known to entertain such definite and admirable views, concerning this greatest of all crimes against society, as may be clearly deduced from the Sacred Scriptures. And this instance of murder, as showing a decided improvement on nature, is only one out of multitudes,—all of them of great importance,—which might be advanced from the same immense treasury of wisdom, truth, and goodness.

These observations, with innumerable others of a similar design, which cannot here be introduced, will evince, that nature, without revelation, is a wheel without its counter-wheel. It is true, it can be made to move in some eccentric direction; and to answer some inferior purpose, such as the temporary amusement of a child; but, separated from the general machinery to which it properly belongs, it is essentially disabled, cannot possibly accomplish its original intentions; while its notches strike even the curious observer, as substantially useless, and as absolutely inexplicable.

III. PRINCIPLES OF INQUIRY, WHICH MAY DISCOVER AND DETERMINE INSTANCES OF FITNESS.

ANOTHER fruitful source of knowledge, respecting the adaptation of revealed religion to the nature and state of mankind, is the maxim, "That is good whose contrary is evil." Should we suppose, not merely the absence, but the opposite, of revelation, to what a dreadful rebound of thought must the mind be impelled!

The contrary of facts, however, cannot always be conceived. The opposition here must be, that they have, or have not, occurred;—that the acting characters in question have, or have not, existed. We know, for example, that the world exists; but we cannot conceive another world, in all things precisely the reverse of the present. We can go no farther than the idea of its non-existence. With regard, then, to all the statements and narratives of Scripture, let them be resolved into affirmative propositions, which we may negative in hypothesis, and judge, according to the rules already mentioned, which is most consonant to reason and the nature of man, their truth or their falsehood; that there should be a God, or the contrary; or, admitting his existence, that he should, or should not, create, and redeem, and govern the world, by the astonishing measures which he is said to have adopted; that man is immortal, or perishable; and that there is an eternal state of inconceivable rewards and punishments, or that futurity is eternal nothingness. We may carry this inquiry to an unlimited extent, still eliciting the strongest probable evidence of the fitness of the Bible to promote the noblest designs.

Again: If the whole or part of the historical accounts be admitted, simply as to the existence of the characters and events, but the descriptions and reflections connected with them be disputed; let us here, as above, suppose the reverse of the subjects, —that God is the perfect opposite of wisdom and omniscience, of holiness and truth, of benevolence and love. Here the mind, unseduced and unbiassed by infidelity, must be shocked, and instinctively return to find repose in the admirable counterpart of the supposition, where alone it feels the truth is to be found.

Think, also, of the contrary of all the doctrines and duties enforced by revelation. Suppose, that men are not corrupt, but pure and good; that when sin is committed, they ought not to

repent, but to glory in what is termed "their shame;" that sin, in fact, is not the transgression of the law of God, but the violation of some dark, uncertain law of nature, or that there is no such thing as sin in the world; that men ought not to love God, but to hate him; and ought not to obey him, but uniformly to rebel against him. In short, let us look at the converse of all that glorious series of moral axioms, and maxims, and sentiments, by which the Bible, above all other books, is so strikingly distinguished; and the utter perversity and monstrosity of the case will convince us, that truth and excellence must be sought for, not in the middle way from this imaginary scene of horrors, but in the utmost conceivable distance from it. And this extremity of excellence is obviously, and only, to be found in the Bible.

This view of the subject will, at all events, oblige the deist to confess, that the Scriptures are not wholly to be rejected; that much of what is true, and of the first importance, at least in regard to the business and happiness of life, may be gathered from their pages. If infidels, however, would determine unanimously as to the portions of narrative, and doctrine, and precept, which, in their judgment, are absolutely false and improper, it would then be much more easy to reason from the supposition of this falsehood and impropriety, to the absurd consequences which would follow. We might, in this case, take the grounds singly, and in succession; evincing, as we conceive, with certainty, the truth of that which is denied, simply from the impossible results of its contrary. An adaptation might be proved, though indirectly, from the absurd consequences of rejecting it. But the extreme difficulty of knowing what are the real sentiments of deists on this line of distinction, would render the attempt in some sense useless, as we might, in every instance, fix our foot on premises disallowed by some infidel. And the instances of fitness to be furnished by the Scriptures are, we think, so numerous, that the application of this species of proof to the whole would, of itself, require a volume.

In the mean time, we may instance the consequences of the assertion, that the Bible, generally speaking, (and this, perhaps, will go near to meet the view of the deist,) shows a real discordance of its materials, both as mutually combined, and as collectively applied to the system of nature; an absence of all proper and useful relationship. This involves the positive falsehood and forgery of the books; for neither truth nor sincerity could

admit of such discordance; though occasionally mixed up with some smaller portions of just sentiment: The case supposes even these to be the instruments of a base design; and as, in some sense, vitiated by this alliance to corruption; and by their own influence, as giving an authority and a favourable colour to the rest.

Now, to illustrate the subject, if this statement be correct, what must be our opinion of the man who, at the first publication of the alleged imposture, should have ventured to deliver the following reflections?—

"I hold in my hand a Book, which I know to be, substantially, the most deceitful fabrication that was ever constructed. Whether it was written by the persons whose names it bears, or whether any such individuals ever had an existence, are inquiries, while the forgery is allowed, of small or no importance. One thing is certain,—that its authors were ignorant and wicked men; ignorant, for the work is wild, incoherent, and ridiculous; and wicked, for its design is to impose a prodigious series of lies, under the name of the truth of God, upon the whole human race; while its tendency to promote superstition, and tyranny, and priestcraft, &c. ought, as a farther reason, to stamp it with universal reprobation.

"I allow, that its first appearances are specious; but common sense alone, and more especially the force of intellect and learning, may soon see through the pitiful disguise. No one can believe it to be true, without so far forfeiting his character as a man of impartiality and discernment; nay, he must, in this respect at least, be either weak or wicked, superstitious, ignorant, or prejudiced, or all these put together. And those, on the contrary, who shall have the firmness to oppose it will always, by so doing, show, not only their sincere regard to truth and virtue, but also, beyond all comparison, their superior strength of mind.

"But now I will boldly predict, that, notwithstanding this is, doubtless, a most obvious and just view of the Book, it will gain for many ages a most extensive and inexplicable ascendancy in the world. And this success shall not be owing, in any material measure, to the influence of those causes which commonly command the acceptation of imposture. It shall not arise, in a general view of the subject, from any mastery employed to compel belief. On the contrary, the stream of power shall flow

in the opposite direction. Thousands shall be degraded, and tortured, and martyred, merely for asserting their conviction of its truth. And, even in the best of times, as to the peace and prevalence of the church, it shall be cause of real disgrace with the fashionable world, and with the world at large, for the followers of Christ to discover any peculiar and ardent attachment to the faith.

"This success shall not result from the ignorance of those followers; for, multitudes of men, in various countries, and in every age,—men belonging to the most respectable and cultivated classes, and possessed of general information, and, in many instances, of very great learning,—shall rank among their numbers. Nor must these persons be contemned for mental imbecility. Distinguished by taste and talents of the highest order, they yet shall stoop to the authority of this incredible fiction,—shall deliberately embrace, not some single dogmas, mysterious and impossible, which corruption may wring from it, and which great and good men may sometimes receive, without the least impeachment of their general understanding, but the whole, yes, the whole ridiculous imposition, with its thousands of absurdities, which men of infinitely less ability might discover at a glance.

"And I will add, that even prejudice cannot account for this extraordinary belief. Great numbers of the persons here alluded to shall be found to act, in their reception of the Gospel, not only in opposition to many strong motives in general, but also to their own powerful prejudices in particular. They shall be unexpectedly and unaccountably, yet completely and lastingly, converted from the strongest infidelity to the faith of this absurd and senseless dream. But more than this; credulity itself—a weakness sometimes found in mighty minds—must not assume the laurels of this wondrous victory. The persons now in question shall be as remarkable for their cautiousness, coolness, and even scepticism, on every subject of their investigations, as for the high and noble mental qualities, already mentioned. Their minds shall usually seem as if they worked on some principle of geometry. Still they shall give a free and full assent to the Christian religion. Superstition, properly so called, shall be as foreign to their views and habits as to those of an infidel, and yet they shall absolutely be so superstitious as to yield to the influence of the Gospel.

"With regard to their sincerity, moral excellence, and usefulness, these cannot possibly be questioned. They shall give such undeniable proofs to confirm them as must, perforce, seal up the mouth of slander itself. Their faith cannot, therefore, be the result of conscious wickedness. And, to crown the whole, the majority of these endowments and conditions shall be found to concur in vast multitudes of Christians, and individuals shall arise who shall exemplify the whole.

"It shall, also, be surprising, that sound learning and Christianity shall uniformly render each other their mutual support. And this shall be the case for ages. It must, no doubt, cause great wonder to perceive, that, in proportion as good learning is improved, Christianity shall extend her conquests, and reign with greater triumph. As men go on to gather wisdom from the experience of ages, the discoveries of science, and the progress of mind and of civilization, they shall actually be just so much the more inclined to countenance this silly and pestiferous superstition."

Such, to be consistent, is the representation which modern infidelity must give of Christianity. The reply, perhaps, will be, that the case, indeed, is wonderful, but that similar observations might have been advanced in regard to the latter and surprising discoveries of the arts and sciences. "Who," it will be said, "could have foreseen, a thousand years ago, that a power of great practical consequence could ever have resulted from the application of steam?" But all such comparisons present a mighty difference. The discoveries alluded to are merely an extension of the principles of truth and nature, and are, therefore, when examined, found to be in perfect accordance with such principles. It is not so in the progress of the Christian faith; on the contrary, the view just given, which, as shown above, might fairly seem to come from the lips of the infidel, involves, we conceive, a moral impossibility,—a perfect contradiction to every known law and motive by which the human mind is actuated: If not, let him give a more consistent and more evident explanation.

This reasoning is what mathematicians call "an argument *ad absurdum*," in which some proposition is advanced, and its truths proved indirectly, by supposing its contrary, and reasoning legitimately from hence to an absurd conclusion. We assert, that revelation is completely adapted to the moral state and

wants of man, and that this is perfectly evident from its nature and genius, at the first examination. But this is strongly denied. We assume, that this denial is justly founded, and then proceed to inquire, why, in this case, the Christian faith should have met with a reception so ample, and so circumstanced, as is above described. The reader will, of course, draw the consequence for himself.

Another mode of inquiry, respecting the relations and fitness of the scheme in question, refers to its nature and properties as professedly good. Of the proper characteristics of what is good, or expedient, or desirable, we have certain just and indestructible notions, even while in full chase after that which is absolutely evil. The covetous and the sensual invariably wish, in their respective pursuits, for the good that yields the highest pleasure, is the most easy of access, the most secure, the most lasting. Our conceptions of good, in regard to the present temporary state of existence, possess a principle of analogy, by which we may arrive at some proper apprehension of the value of religion, as soon as the Scriptures present it to the mind. Were it not, indeed, for this beautiful and corrective similitude, we never could attain to a right understanding of Divine things;—in fact, we could have no idea of such things at all. This analogy is, therefore, woven through the whole tissue of revelation. Natural things are constantly employed as the means of communicating some view and sense of those which are eternal.

Of the common opinions concerning good we will here draw out a brief selection, leaving the reader to mark for himself their application to the scheme of Scripture, whether as a whole, or as to any of its principles or parts, separately considered. Hobbes, of Malmesbury, himself an infidel, abridged these opinions from the writings of the famous philosopher who acted as preceptor to Alexander the Great. Let the reader keep in mind the three rules referred to in page 140, and determine for himself, as to the application of each of the instances contained in the following series:—

"Good is that which we love for itself; and that for which we love somewhat else; and that which all things desire; and that which reason dictates; and that which, when we possess, we are well, or satisfied; and that which satisfies; and the cause or effect of any of these; and that which keeps off, or destroys, the contrary of any of these. Again: To take the

good, and reject the evil, is well; and to take the greater good rather than the less, and the lesser evil rather than the greater. And pleasure, as such, is good; and all things beautiful are, so far, good. And all the virtues—justice, valour, temperance, magnanimity, munificence, and other similar habits—are good; and health, strength, riches, friends, and honour, and glory; and ability to say or do; and will, and willingness, and the like; and all arts and sciences; and life; and whatsoever is just; and that of which there cannot be too much; and that upon which much labour and cost have been bestowed; and that which many desire; and that which is praised; and that which even our enemies and evil men praise; and what good we prefer; and what we advise; and that which is possible: All this is good; or, in other words, may be lawfully undertaken. And that which is easy; and that which depends on our own will; and that which is proper for us to do; and that which is extraordinary; and what is suitable; and what we hope to master; and what we are fit for; and what evil men do not; and what we love to do: All these are good."

Discrimination and judgment will, doubtless, be requisite to trace the resemblance through the whole of this enumeration; and a weak and captious mind might offer numberless objections, in regard to the application of the several particulars mentioned above. But let these particulars be fairly expounded, and the greater part, if not the whole of them, will apply, with much aptitude and force, each to one view or other of the religion of the Bible; either to the whole, or to a part; considered also as a means, or as an end, or to the mind and condition of him who receives it in the manner it requires. Even riches, beauty, strength, art, and science, which seem to be utterly inapplicable to a kingdom not of this world, all these are still, in their true and proper sense,—a sense strictly analogical, not merely metaphorical,—to be really possessed by the Christian, in a degree absolutely unbounded, both in himself and in the contemplation of universal excellence, eternally diffused around him. "To him that overcometh will I give to inherit all things."

With a view to follow up the same line of comparison, we present a selection from common opinions on the subject of pleasure, though in some respects identified with those on the nature of good.

"Pleasure is a sudden and sensible motion of the soul towards that which is natural, as grief is the contrary. Pleasant, therefore, is that which is the cause of such motion. It is pleasant to return to our own nature. And customs and habits are pleasant; and those things which are not violent. Unpleasant are those things which proceed from necessity,—as cares, study, contentions. Of these the contraries are pleasant,—ease, remission from labour and care. Pleasant is that to which we have an appetite; and sometimes the appetite itself; also, those things are pleasant to which we have an appetite on reason and persuasion. And the remembrance of things, whether, in the fact, they pleased or displeased, are, in some respects, more pleasant than their presence. And pleasant are things we hope for; and victory; and honour and reputation, among men of honour and reputation; and to love, and to be loved, and respected. And likewise change, and variety; and what we return to afresh. And to learn; and to admire; and to do good; and to receive good; and to help up one that is fallen. And to finish what is imperfect; and resemblance; and imitation; and to have escaped narrowly; and to associate with our fellows, for similar things please each other. And every one is naturally pleasing to himself. And that which is his own is pleasing. And to bear sway; and to be thought wise;—all these are pleasing.—The contraries of this enumeration are unpleasant."

That the above is, substantially, a just view of things, is evident from this,—that these are principally the motives by which mankind are led to act, justly or unjustly, or, indeed, to act at all. Here, again, we must observe, that judgment and caution are necessary in expounding these principles, as applicable to the pleasures connected with scriptural religion. The design of this essay does not admit a more enlarged investigation; but we have not the least doubt of the legitimacy and importance of the general bearing of such principles, in this respect.

It is also of importance to inquire, What are we to understand by "just?" Here the definition must depend upon the knowledge of what is law; for injustice is the violation of a law. "Injustice, in the opinion of all men, is that which is contrary to the law of nature. Injustice only in one commonwealth is that which is contrary to the civil law, or law of such realm,

And so of other kinds of law. He who is accused of a breach of law, is charged with having done it either ignorantly, or unwillingly, or in anger, or in premeditation. Apart from the written law, whatsoever is just proceeds from equity, or goodness. From goodness proceeds that for which we are praised, or honoured. From equity proceed those actions which, though not commanded in the written law, are yet, when that law is reasonably interpreted and applied, apparently required by it.

"Actions of equity are such as these: Not too rigorously to punish errors, mischances, or injuries: To have a sympathy for human failings: Not to regard the law so much as the intention of the legislator; and not the words so much as the meaning of the law: Not to regard so much the fact as the purpose of the doer; nor part of the fact but the whole; nor what the doer is, but what, for the most part, or always, he has been: To have a remembrance of the good, rather than the ill, received: To endure injuries with patience: To prefer a decision by argument, to that by recourse to action; arbitration, to a legal sentence. For the arbitrator looks to what is equitable; the judge to what is law. Arbitration was introduced for this express reason, that equity might prevail."

Now, whether the narratives, and doctrines, and precepts, and spirit, of the Bible, be in correspondence with these sentiments, let the intelligent and candid reader diligently inquire, and impartially determine.

We might still enlarge, and confirm these views, by referring to the elements of "honourable," or worthiness; of that species of desert, sometimes termed "praise." These elements are not more deeply fixed in nature than in the constitution of the spiritual kingdom described in the Bible. This answers to the sentiments of St. Paul, where he says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

The following are some of the common sentiments on this subject:—

"'Honourable' is that which we love for itself, and is also laudable; and the good which pleases only because it is good; and virtue; and the signs of virtue. And honourable are the

causes and effects of things honourable; and those actions, the reward of which is honour, and of which the reward is rather honour than profit; and that which we do not for our own sakes; and what we do for the good of our country, neglecting our own good. And those things are honourable which, good of themselves, are not so to the owner; and what we do for other men, especially for benefactors; and the bestowing of benefits; and the contrary of those things of which we are ashamed; and those things which men strive for earnestly, without fear. And of the more honourable and better man, the virtues are more honourable; and more honourable are the virtues which tend to the benefit of other men, than those which tend to our own; and honourable are those things which are just; and victory; and things that excel; and what none can do but ourselves; and possessions we reap no profit by; and those things which are had in honour; and the signs of praise; and to have nothing of the servile and mercenary."

The reasons of these sentences, respectively, may be found in the "Rhetorie" of the ancient author referred to before, which the reader may peruse, for his additional satisfaction; but the transfer of these, and other similar characteristics, to the truth of the Divine Word, must be attempted by himself, but with the caution and judgment which the importance of the work demands. And we may venture to assert, that the more these truths are tested by those principles, when the principles themselves are rightly seen and applied, the more will the matchless worth and nobleness of piety appear; whether viewed in its perfect prototype,—the perfections of God, or in the lofty mind, and morality, and eternal rewards, of the Christian.

Thus much at present for the nature and properties of revelation, absolutely considered. But other schemes of religion and happiness may call for some comparison. Should one of these be found even greatly to excel all that is revealed in the Bible, yet this would not destroy the truth and force of the delineations to which we have now adverted. Let the comparison, however, be traced by the reader, if he choose, with all the penetration and nicety imaginable. He will then decide to which the award of preferable excellence is due. Let us glance at two or three instances.

The great scope of our existence and desires is happiness. This identifies itself with our improvement and perfection.

Religion, therefore, in these respects, may be viewed, either as a means, or as an end. And these, again, may be considered, the latter as resulting from the former at some distance of time; or both as embracing each other at the same moment. The scheme of revelation ought, accordingly, to be examined, as a means immediately promoting our moral cultivation, in order to our ultimate and perfect happiness; and as, in some sense, antedating this grand purpose, by an accompanying communication of the richest enjoyment. In the former sense, it is compared with other systems of religion, and with education, and government; in the latter, with the goods of life, so ardently pursued by the great majority of mankind.

The first of these comparisons as to the various systems of religion, ancient and modern, has been pursued at great length, and with abundant success, by many admirable writers. Halyburton, Leland, Ireland, Brown, and others, have not only furnished the most valuable and ample materials on this subject; but they have marked the several points of contrast with such fairness and force, and brought out their conclusions with such clearness and argument, as inevitably to produce the deepest conviction of the superior claims of revelation. To such writers we can boldly refer our deistical opponents; who are challenged to show, on the same plan of facts and reasonings, illustrative of one another, a single system of religion that can at all compete with Christianity, either as to light, or power, or simplicity, or moral tendency. These authors may, indeed, have been neglected, or read and contemned; but where is the book in which they have been confuted?

Intellectual education can do much to strengthen and inform the mind, to refine the taste, and unfold the genius of its pupils. But, of course, it cannot fashion the materials on which it works to any form of excellence inconsistent with the nature and extent of their own powers. The tulip never could be reared into an oak. And the stores of educational improvement, unconnected with religion, are only such as arts, and learning, and experience can supply. Nor, neither mind, nor matter, nor any combinations, faculties, emotions, actions, and re-actions, of which they are capable, can produce, without the help of revelation, that most perfect and happy state of man, of which he is in constant search, and for which his constitution seems to have been originally formed. If nature possess not

seeds of this superior state, how should they be sown, except by God himself? And if not sown, how could the most diligent attention to the soul bring forth their proper fruits? Education is useless beyond the limits of her own sphere. She may attempt impossible things, but, like one who hopes to gain a battle, while his sword merely cuts a tree, or is brandished in the air, she will only show at once her folly and her pride. She cannot plant roses and lilies on the waters of the ocean; nor create, with all her efforts, existences which only Omnipotence could make.

The whole history of this kind of education shows the truth of these remarks. Cultivated intellect, and moral principle, are things essentially distinct from each other. All ages have shown, by unequivocal examples, that the former may exist in great perfection without the latter. The more, indeed, a man is possessed of intellectual strength, uninfluenced by a corrective morality, the more he is qualified to be the minister of mischief, both to himself and to others. Learning and polish may be serviceable to religion, but cannot give it birth. And if it could, the great majority of mankind would be no better for it, as totally unable to procure such attainments. But as to any consistent notions of the grand plan and final scope of Providence; as to the knowledge of those means by which alone we can with certainty attain the favour of God, and rectitude, and peace of mind; and as to the application of that highest species of philosophy which consists, not in the amusing play of syllogisms, and the discovery and classification of the laws of nature, but in a right rule of life; the most cultivated individuals, unenlightened by the Scriptures, are as ignorant as the populace.

It will scarcely be required, that governments should come into the comparison. Deists usually express their strong dislike of governments in general, but particularly of that of the country under which they live. This authority, they are willing to allow, is quite ineffectual, as a means of perfect improvement, whether in regard to the character or condition of the people. It is, indeed, so little capable of acting as a proper substitute for revelation, that, we may fairly presume, it could not itself exist without some religious sanction. Political laws have their own appropriate range and usefulness; they have little influence to command the genuine motives of a moral action. There are

innumerable evils committed against the law of nature, and even against the demands of deism, of which they take no cognizance.

To go on with our comparison: No man, certainly, will venture to assert, that the mere instincts of our nature—our unregulated appetites and passions—are sufficient to conduct us to the nobler ends of our being. Their claims are so opposed to each other, and range so wildly, and to such an extravagant extent, that, in fact, this is the very state of things which it is the object of the question to rectify, and must, therefore, be distinct from the proper means of this amendment.

As to reason, it could never be intended to elicit and arrange, without some more direct assistance from God, a system of religion adequate to all the moral wants of man; because the essential subjects of this system, till supplied from some foreign quarter, come not within the limit of its operations. They are neither subjects of consciousness, like those of the powers and properties of the mind; nor of science, like the motions and aspects of the heavenly bodies; nor of observation and experience, like the narratives of history. By what reasoning, direct or indirect, can we, with certainty, conclude, revelation apart,—that God will pardon sin, that the body will rise again from the grave, and that judgment, and a state of immortality, will follow?

Or, supposing this valuable knowledge may be gathered from the intimations of nature,—intimations which, however, on such subjects, must, as already hinted, first be brought into view by some Divine Expositor,—some sound, of which nature can only give the feeble echo; supposing, I say, this improbable condition of things, could the inarticulate, though expressive, force of nature explain an abstract truth with the precision which belongs to language? Are all men competent to reason out a pure and coherent scheme of duty for themselves? Are the moral systems even of philosophers correct and unanimous? From whence, indeed, should they obtain a principle of truth, and of mutual agreement? They had no infallible teacher to direct them. And, did nature possess within herself all the knowledge contained in revelation, yet, without a tongue to announce it in propositions perfectly determinate and audible, her meaning would remain concealed.

How should any subject of abstract and complex truth be

sufficiently unfolded without a literal instructor? Could the doctrines of jurisprudence be clearly taught by nods, and smiles, and frowns? Or does pantomime address the understanding in a manner as perspicuous and definite as that of dialogue, or demonstration? "For, what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." As a man is the fittest person to explain the meaning of his own words, or countenance, or actions; so God alone, the infinite Author of all, is the only proper and infallible Expositor of the system of the world, as well as of the genuine import of his own revelation.

It may be said, that the Scriptures themselves have given a speaking power to nature; that David observes, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." True; but this is merely a poetic reference to the impressive manner in which the general notion of the greatness and goodness of God is deepened in the mind by the appearance of the heavenly bodies. It cannot possibly imply, that the heavens, or, indeed, the whole of the natural world, had, purely of themselves, discovered, and defined, and proved, and explained the perfections of God, as to the full extent of their bearing on the duties and blessings of mankind. We repeat, that nothing which bears the character of a mute exhibition can clearly discuss, and fully express, its own nature and designs,—to say nothing of profound truths and facts, which lie beyond its range.

There are only now two states of mind remaining to be noticed,—a perfect neutrality and carelessness respecting all religion and irreligion, or a spirit of hostility to every thing connected with the acknowledgment and love of God. But will total inattention to the imperfections of our nature and circumstances, and to the various means propounded for their removal, prove a remedy? This notion is the same with that of the instincts just alluded to, and goes on the supposition, that the stream of things may run itself pure. We might, with equal reason, expect the untutored savage to attain, by the mere

natural growth of mind, to a perfect knowledge of the sciences. The vast importance of a remedy, admitting it as possible, might justify an ardent and diligent investigation of any measures, professedly and probably sustaining that desirable character. The slightest feasibility connected with some question respecting our health, or our wealth, is often quite sufficient to excite our liveliest interest, and our most laborious research; for, here we are unbiassed and sincere, and act agreeably to the rules of proportion, as to the real magnitude and value of the subject of inquiry. It was not so, as to a higher question, with the celebrated Hume, who confessed that he had never read the whole of the New Testament. But, certainly, the great plan propounded by the inspired writers will be allowed to rank, among the numerous systems of improvement, as, at least, a candidate for the approbation of mankind; and as asking to be tried by its real merits, closely examined. It will, doubtless, be confessed, that this thoughtless state of mind, instead of being preferable to the solicitude and practical measures required by the Scriptures, is completely discredited, were it only for the reasons just suggested;—its positive unfairness, and its utter inconsistency with rational principles of action, as applied to the ordinary concerns of life. This evidence is strongly presumptive against its pretensions to any kind of excellence, and particularly to the allowance of its claims as a preferable means of attaining happiness, when compared with Christianity. Nor can it always maintain its own neutrality and hardihood. Most painful fears and suspicions, in regard to the ground of its boasted tranquillity, will sometimes force themselves on the most careless, and sceptical, and giddy mind; fears and suspicions, which it is the powerful tendency of the Gospel to destroy. How frequently has this unhappy state of mind been confessed and exemplified by the infidel, especially in the prospect of death!

Irreligion is so evidently inimical to the comfort and even existence of society,—to say nothing of the claims of God and eternity,—that little need be said to show how it stands directly opposed to truth, and prudence, and moral goodness. This is freely admitted by the sober part of deistical professors, who are constantly decrying certain portions of the Bible for their alleged immorality, and declaiming in favour of the superior moral, and even pious, tendency of their own system. The

greatest and best of men, nay, the voice of the populace, in every age and country, have decidedly acknowledged the necessity and importance of some form of religion, in carrying on the affairs, at least, of temporal society. The contrary opinion is pure atheism, which strikes at the very being of all morality. With such an opinion, what is it to me, whether mankind are happy or miserable, provided they interfere not with my personal concerns;—concerns, formed from my own notions and passions, right or wrong? Supposing the whole population of the globe were in my power, why might I not destroy them in a moment, and without remorse, if I thought, —merely thought,—that I should live the longer, and chose to enjoy in solitude the wreck of the scene? Who will say, that I should act inconsistently with my principles? It is possible, I allow, that another atheist might urge, "This would be improper, and even imprudent in regard to yourself." But who has the right to teach me? Is there such a thing, indeed, as right in the world? Or rather, has not every man the right to do as he pleases? And what is wisdom to me, if I think it folly to be wise? You tell me, that nature points to a very different line of conduct. I tell you, that nature has no authority with me, if I differ from her dictates. Besides, I have as good a right to interpret nature for myself as any other man. You think she urges you to be just and benevolent. I think she urges me to rob and to kill; and if I choose to risk the consequences, what have you to object, either to my creed, or to my conduct?

The only thing, perhaps, that can be said against this statement is, that such is not the fact of the case;—that the enemies of religion sometimes lead as moral lives as any other people, and that Christians themselves are often guilty of the highest crimes. But the abstract character of principles is one thing, and their practical effect another. Men do not always choose to be consistent. A different class of reasons frequently determine them to strike out from the uniform path of their professions. The atheist finds it usually convenient to act as if there were some true religion. He has the cowardice to boast one system, and to do unwilling or unconscious homage to another. Let reason judge whether the view given above is not, however, theoretically correct. As to the crimes of the Christian world, they are confessedly a violation of religious

principles; and commonly committed by those who have never possessed any part of religion but the name. In all those who have ever felt the force of Divine truth, crime shows, that they have abandoned their Creator, and are so far "without God in the world,"—that is, atheists at heart, and in the undercurrent of their character. This is, therefore, substantially a confirmation of our statement.

But if all religions were proved to be entirely superstitious, and in some respects injurious to the interests of society, yet, since for ages they have been incorporated, more or less, with the notions, and habits, and leading institutions of mankind, the infidel might well inquire, whether their continuance would not be a lesser evil than the shock and consequences of their complete disruption from the great fabric, with which they are combined? Could he substitute a superior principle of improvement and of harmony? Or does he really believe, that the world would be happier, and more secure, without a single vestige of any kind of piety?

But we must now proceed, briefly, to compare revelation, as a scheme of happiness, with the goods of the present life, so eagerly pursued by most men. Here, again, we recur to common opinions on the subject of comparison. The unbiassed judgment acts, for the most part, correctly in comparing the goods of life with one another. We invariably prefer a thousand pounds to fifty. An application of the same just principles of inference, in comparing these with the goods held forth in Scripture, would soon convince us of the infinite superiority of the latter. Whether the Bible be true or false, affects not the truth and immediate design of this comparison, which is simply to show the fitness of religion to the existing state of things.

To see this subject clearly, we must keep in mind the following definitions of comparatives: "'More' is so much, and somewhat besides. 'Less' is that which, with somewhat else, is so much. 'Greater, and more in number,' are laid only comparatively to less, and fewer in number. 'Great and little, many and few,' are taken comparatively to the most of the same kind. So that 'great and many' is that which exceeds; 'little and few' is that which is exceeded by most of the same kind." These things premised; and the characters already given of good, absolutely considered, also kept in mind; we may now, from the common opinions, enumerate the following:—

"Greater good" is many than fewer, or one of those many; and greater is the kind in which the greatest is greater than the greatest of another kind; and greater is that good than another good, whose kind is greater than another's kind: And greater is that from which another good follows, than the good which follows; and of two which exceed a third, greater is that which exceeds it most; and that which causes the greater good; and that which proceeds from a greater good: And greater is that which is chosen for itself, than that which is chosen for somewhat else; and the end is greater than that which is not the end; and that which less needs other things, than that which needs them more; and that which is independent, than that which is dependent on another; and the beginning than not the beginning; and the cause than not the cause; and that which hath a greater beginning or cause; and the beginning or cause of a greater good.

And that which is scarce is greater than that which is plentiful, because more difficult to be obtained; and that which is plentiful, than that which is scarce, because oftener in use; and that which is easy, than that which is hard; and that whose contrary is greater; and that whose want is greater. Virtue, than not virtue, is a greater good; and a greater good is that, the effects of which are more honourable; and the effects of greater virtues are greater goods; and that is a greater good, the excess of which is more tolerable; and those things are greater, which may with more honour be described; and greater is the desire of better things; and the knowledge of such things; and those things of which the knowledge is better.

And greater good is that which wise men prefer; and that which is in better men; and that which better men choose; and that which is more than that which is less delightful; and that which is more than that which is less honourable: And that is a greater good, which we would have for ourselves and friends; and that which is, than that which is not, lasting; and that which is, than that which is not, firm; and what many desire, than what few; and what the adversary, or judge, confesses to be greater; and what is more honoured; and what is more laudable.

And good divided appears, in some respects, greater than when undivided; and sometimes seems greater when compounded, than when simple: And that is greater which is done

with opportunity, age, place, time, or with disadvantageous means, than that which is done otherwise. And that which is natural is a greater good than that which is attained to; and the same part of that which is great, than of that which is less; and that which is good to ourselves, than that which is simply so; and possible than not possible; and that which is available in the greater need, as in age or sickness; and of two means, that which more immediately conduces to the end; and whatever is comprised in the design or object of our life: And that is greater which we really do, than which we do for show; and that which is conducive to the greater number of uses; and that which serves us in great necessity; and that which is joined with less trouble; and that which is joined with more delight; and of the two, that which is added to a third, makes the whole the greater; and that of which, in the possession, we are the more sensible.

I am quite aware, that these opinions are presented under several disadvantages. The principles on which they are founded, as before observed, and examples, and other illustrations of each, could not be introduced without some disproportionate enlargement of this essay. There are persons, probably, who will consider them, while unexplained by application, as somewhat obscure. Others may pronounce them to be, at least in certain instances, extremely plain and simple; approaching to the nature of truisms, and unworthy of observation. This simplicity, we think, ought rather to recommend them. Valuable truth is, perhaps, as often to be found on the surface as at the bottom of a well. They must now be left, however, to the judgment and candid construction of the intelligent reader. He may, if he please, either add to their number, or dismiss them altogether from the body of the Argument.

Thus, like the artist before alluded to, we have tried several instruments successively; but all have proved unfit for our design, revelation excepted. It is true, the analysis has been imperfect, and the view of respective parts but cursory, still, enough, we think, has been advanced, to serve as a clue to conduct the anxious inquirer to the important conclusion of the truth of this fitness.

Some plain or private Christians, however, it is feared, will not think they meet with much in these remarks, either to

delight their taste, or to increase their profit. Happily no critical inquiry into the parts and structure of the Bible is requisite in order to promote their best instruction. Divine truth comes home to the humble and observant mind, like the light of heaven to the lifted eye, which questions not those principles of optics on which the vision is enjoyed. But nothing should be left undone to fix the attention of the infidel, on a subject so important as the sacred authority of the Scriptures. And this is our apology for the nature of these reasonings.

The more severely he examines the suitableness of revelation, as a remedy for every evil, the more in this respect will its excellence be seen, and its truth felt and confirmed. And the Christian himself, should he choose more fully to investigate this species of evidence, might find his faith the more established. One thing is certain :—His grateful wonder would be raised at the discovery of so much wisdom and grace in the contrivance of the system,—so much more than could have been disclosed to him, without this peculiar study of the fitness in question. Here he may be led to traverse fresh and widely-extended fields of beautiful speculation ; yielding equal entertainment to his taste for what is curious, and excitement to the exercise of a lively devotion. Besides, there is nothing more expanding to the mind, than comprehensive views of a great and complex subject. They call forth our strongest intellectual energies ; inducing us to think with a nicety, and judgment, and grasp, which cannot fail to refine as well as strengthen. And what more interesting, in this light, than the unbounded and diversified system of revelation ? What a stately temple ! What noble columns ! What fine proportions ! What delicate tracery ! What exquisite beauty ! What admirable harmony ! Yet what are these to the living and ineffable majesty of Him whose shrine it is !

IV. GENERAL REASONS FOR ADMITTING THE TRUTH OF THIS FITNESS.

Of these reasons, the first that we shall mention, and which, indeed, we have already attempted to illustrate, is the invulnerable proposition,—that no system equal to the scheme of Scripture has yet been presented to the world ; with the additional reflection,—that a better plan is absolutely inconceivable. This leads us, especially in its connexion with some other truths,

to judge favourably of this fitness. We will just resume the subject for one moment.

It cannot be denied, that the world abounds with crimes, and imperfections, and miseries, of every description. It is no less evident, that we are capable at once of the conception and desire of a much more lofty and complete state of things. It seems reasonable, then, to judge, that such a state is possible; otherwise we must allow, that nature, in giving us this aspiring constitution, has committed a most manifest and lamentable error. But where, except in revelation, can we find what deserves the name of a rational ground of certainty on this great question? or any thing that can pretend to a consistent and suitable delineation of the state itself?

We have already shown that, from a variety of fair comparisons, if pursued to their extent, we shall undoubtedly infer the avowed character of the Gospel, as by far the most suitable, and as, indeed, the only applicable, remedy in this case. So long, then, as no other system of professed improvement and happiness can make any pretences to an equality with revelation, considered merely in the ideal of the system, without regard to its truth or falsehood, it seems quite reasonable, before any farther trial made to prove its real tendency, to allow its probable adaptation to the purpose of a remedy. "This, or none," must be its motto. The presumption is, that it was designedly constructed as the perfect and the only plan. Other systems are but very partial and uncertain expedients. Revelation includes in its comprehensive range the entire variety of such expedients, and these, too, in their highest requisite perfection, with infinite additions of a still higher character.

No deist, we may also observe, can deny, that the aggregate of the happiness which the inspired writers have sketched out, is, whether true or false, infinitely preferable to nonentity, or unceasing misery, or any other conceivable mode of existence. But this happiness is not even professed by any other system: The conception of it was too lofty for an infidel to reach. This alone is strongly presumptive of that perfect fitness which we wish to substantiate.

It is no reply to say, that we may easily conceive ten thousand foolish schemes of joy, which never can be realized. We rejoin, Their folly is a reason why they ought to be impossible. We see not their congruity with the whole, or,

indeed, with any part, of our being and concerns. When examined, they are found to be heterogeneous dreams, without even the semblance of truth or of proof.

It is not so with the scheme for which we plead. We can imagine nothing finer or more perfect than the Christian life; nothing lovelier than the Christian character; nothing happier than the Christian state. Here the mind has taken a celestial and god-like mould; is formed for a scene of unparalleled enjoyment; of splendours which surpass all the glories of this world; of friendships the most pure, and rich, and intense; of pursuits the most sublime and transporting.

In the meanwhile, this exalted expectation re-acts, with the best possible effect, on the duties and pleasures of the present life; and the joy alone, which is said immediately to flow from a right reception and experience of religion, must, if there be such joy at all, far surpass all earthly pleasures. For instance: We might judge, before the fact, that communion with God would be ineffably delightful: All temporal friendships, however sweet and strong, are but tasteless drops, when compared with this rich and copious libation, this "wine upon the lees well refined."

Is it reasonable to suppose, that the benevolent God, who made the secret springs of mind and heart, should leave them to be touched merely by human loves, and not by the far more noble and ravishing impressions of his own Spirit? And if we suppose him to let out the streams of his goodness upon the soul, who, with a view to such enjoyment, has been purified, and strengthened, and excited to an ardent thirst after it, how embuing, how entrancing, must be the consequent emotions! Is the poet happy in the brilliant creations of his imaginative genius? Let him stretch that genius to the utmost: The Christian, in the far more powerful range of a Divine faith, beholds far other visions; visions marked, indeed, by grand distinctions, when contrasted with the others; for they are loftier—they are realities—yes, and they are all his own!

All these, and other considerations connected with this first reason, viewed together;—the necessity of some superior state of things; our thirst to obtain it; a mind endued with powers of taste and judgment, not to contrive, but to determine, the fitness of a remedy, when offered; a great variety of such professed schemes presented; their claims searched into separately, and by comparison; and revelation, thus examined,

appearing obviously to be the most pure, and unexceptionable, and excellent, as a whole, including a much more extensive range of subjects in its professed discoveries; and furnishing sufficient means, if the system be true, for the perfect realization of its grand pretensions;—all these, we repeat, contemplated in mere theory, may induce a rational conviction of the perfect fitness of the whole.

A second reason may be drawn from the excellent effects apparently produced by the Gospel. We say, "apparently," because the deist cannot possibly object to the term. Had we used the word "certainly," he would, no doubt, have denied the fact.

It is, however, beyond all question, that most excellent effects, whatever be the real cause, stand in regular collocation with the prevalence of the system. These occur with such frequency, and with such general uniformity,—the uniformity, not of physical, but of moral, operation,—as to indicate their cause with the accustomed certainty belonging to those cases which exemplify the formation and influence of human character. We have as good reason to infer the real power of religious causes from the facts connected with them, as to conclude, from the history of education, that systems of moral philosophy, and the various modes of public and private teaching, in regard to morals, have been useful to the world. Nay, we will venture to assert, without the fear of refutation, that, other things being equal, the effects connected with these systems are by no means so numerous, or so determinable, with respect to their cause, as in the case of Christianity.

But this comparison must not include those multitudes of persons, in every age and country, who pay no reasonable attention to the subject of religion. If by far the greater part of a nation called "Christian" will not concern themselves even with the first and general proposals of the Gospel, revelation must not be answerable, either for this inattention, or for any of the crimes which such persons may commit. If this, and other balancing conditions, which we need not mention, be taken into the account, we shall have no great reason to fear the result of the inquiry.

He, then, who asks me to prove the effects in question to have resulted from the Gospel, might, with equal propriety, demand a proof why excellent effects should, in any case, arise from moral instruction; why, for instance, the prosperity of

the ancient Romans, in the early periods of their state, should be thought the consequence of their virtues; or, indeed, why light should flow from the rising of the sun.

What the effects themselves are, produced by the Gospel, whether with regard to nations, or public institutions, or families, or individuals, may be abundantly known, not only from historians, and the writers on the Evidences, but also from our own impartial observation of the instances around us.

Now, if such effects are rationally attributable to this one cause, it is easy to admit its adaptation, either as a natural or supernatural means of producing them. That they should so operate, and be constructed, notwithstanding, on a contrary principle, is not very probable. But if the deist still believes, that such effects are improperly ascribed to the Gospel, he must, then, remove the grounds themselves on which we infer the connexion between cause and effect in this particular instance; and we think they are the same which support us in drawing a similar conclusion in all other instances. He must also prove, that, whatever may be the judgment formed of such grounds of decision, they do not apply to the point in hand; and that the effects already mentioned neither did, nor could, result from the Christian faith. He must do more: He must show other and sufficient causes.

The last reason to be named at present, why we ought to receive the scheme of Scripture as fit and proper for its avowed design, is testimony;—the testimony of those who have sincerely and cordially believed and received it.

Christianity is known to be a suitable and sufficient remedy, by thousands who have made it the subject of experiment. Many of these have eminently advanced in virtue and excellence, so as to command the admiration of the deist himself; and have continually asserted, that there was a perfect correspondence between the religion of Christ, and their own views and feelings; and that, from this very system they had formed their moral character, and drawn the chief portion of their solace and enjoyment; and all this, after having tried the tendency of deism. And, on the other hand, when some of these have fallen from excellence into a course of vice, their abandonment of the Gospel has run parallel with their declension in morals;—a circumstance which has been learned as well from the obvious fact of the case, as from their own free acknowledgment.

Now, why should not these testimonies be received? Are the men in question competent to give evidence in every other case of experience? Do we admit as credible whatever they may affirm as to the effect of history, and literature, and science, on their own minds? Is their testimony admissible in a court of justice, not merely as to the truth of the fact attested, but also in regard to their own opinion and emotion, connected with it, at the time of its occurrence? Why, then, are they disqualified in the single case of religion? Is this the only one in which they are insincere and disqualified? If so, what can be the reason of this peculiarity?

To say, "Men often utter notions in regard to their own experience, which all must allow to be enthusiasm," is saying nothing to the purpose. What can be more wild than certain opinions in philosophy? Even pure science has been the subject of reverie. And must these be wholly rejected on account of such abuses? If not, why this favouritism? And why this exclusive antipathy to religion?

Shall we put in the balance with this testimony, the assertions, or, if you please, the doubtful reasonings, of the deist? Suppose we should say, not reasons, but demonstrations; ought not a plain, unlettered man, quite ignorant of logic, to trust his own experience, and the testimony of a sensible and honest friend, rather than such proofs?

There is a method of demonstrating, by diagrams, the equality, or the precise inequality, of two given triangles. But this is in some sense by abstraction. We cannot even lift one diagram from the paper and affix it to another, for the purpose of combining sensible experience with the process. A joiner, however, in a practical case, comes to a perfect conclusion at once. He takes two triangular pieces of wood, and, putting them together, determines the question, not only to his own satisfaction, but to that of any other person who shall know him to be a competent evidence. He knows nothing of the problem, but he knows the result without it. Religion, in like manner, as to its truth, is, with people in general, not so much a matter of strict reasoning, as of intuitive perception and sensible trial.

It will probably be said, that the testimony of the deist, on this subject, is as good as that of the Christian. It ought, no doubt, to be considered in this light, if no circumstance exist to make a difference between them. Now, the religion of the Bible

cannot, with him, be the subject of experimental testimony, for his principles disallow its very existence. If he say, he was once a Christian, and thought himself sincere; and that his consciousness of the power of religion on his mind was perfectly delusive, as he conceives to be the case in all instances of religious profession; still this only proves to himself the truth of his present principles, and confirms the fact of his incompetency to speak from his own knowledge, on a subject which he thus affirms to be incapable of experiment. What should we think of the logic of the man who, having made some ineffectual attempts to learn the sciences of chemistry and astronomy, should renounce them entirely, and affirm there was no truth in either, because, forsooth, he could never understand them?

But should we give the infidel the entire credit which he claims, the case would even then include a simple opposition as to testimony; and the question would be, how to strike the balance between the authorities; whether by an appeal to numbers, or to moral character, or to intellect, or to any other rule of judgment.

The least that can be said is, that the immense body of highly respectable testimony to the fitness for which we contend, makes it very probable, either that the scheme is true, and was designedly shaped out to suit the ends implied in this fitness; or that some most singular ingenuity has been employed to give so deceptive an appearance of adaptation; or that the most infatuating influence ever known to the world, attends the preaching of the Gospel, in regard to all who believe it. To whichsoever conclusion we may come, the subject clearly deserves from the infidel a serious, a profound, and an impartial inquiry.

V. EXAMPLES OF ADAPTATION AND OF EXCELLENCE.

An extensive and interesting field now opens before us; but into which, with all its beauties, we can enter only to a general and transient view. The numerous and ranging principles, laid down in the foregoing sections, ought here to be distinctly applied to the general character and different branches of Divine revelation. There are, however, other reasons sufficiently obvious to the reader, besides the limit fixed to the present essay, why this cannot now be done. Peculiar qualifications would be requisite, to accomplish this design completely and effectually.

We may, at least, just mention certain leading subjects, which,

we are convinced, it would be highly instructive to examine, according to the varied plan of inquiry sketched out in the former part of this argument.

The incalculable importance of the Bible might be clearly seen, chiefly in its satisfactory explanation of the actual state of man, as a guilty, corrupt, miserable, and condemned sinner, before God, his Maker, and his Judge; in its merciful and gratuitous offer of a perfect deliverance from this wretchedness, by pardon procured through the atoning intervention of a Divine but crucified Redeemer; in its provision of the means, best and entirely adapted to promote morality and holiness, and in its admirable and sublime discoveries of an eternal world.

The immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body, are subjects, in particular, of inconceivable importance; elevating the nature of man to the loftiest rank of existence; and imparting some share of their own eternal splendours to every other being in the universal system. Let these two doctrines be disproved, and in that moment diminution, and darkness, and perplexity, and imposition, confounding all our speculations, and throwing the sensitive mind into utter hopelessness, must mark our life; a life which otherwise we estimate as the noblest gift, and altogether worthy of the wisdom and goodness of the infinite Benefactor from whom it comes.

But where, if we reject the Scriptures, shall we find any clear and decisive, any consistent and proportionate, any grand and authorative, account of these great subjects? Does deism present us with suitable and satisfactory information respecting them? The difference between the two systems, in this respect, is very fully and ably treated by many writers of the first distinction; while the deist has either taken no notice of their arguments, or has refused to grapple with them; and, having dashed his scorn upon them, has, like Falstaff, hastened off to boast of his heroism.

So far the Christian cause has benefited by the controversy. But the perfect coalescence of the above, and of innumerable other subjects of revelation, as applied to the wants of nature, and as admirable additions to it, would admit of a still more extended and useful investigation. Let any one topic, at all important, be selected from the immense multitudes contained in the Bible; and it will, of itself, advantageously sustain a voluminous investigation, as viewed in all its bearings and relations;

and as manifesting, throughout, the great variety and value which, in this respect, may attach to what, apart from such references, is individual and simple.

Should we inquire, for instance, into the nature and effects of the fear of God, we should soon discover its amazing purity and energy, as a principle of morals; and how admirably it links the creature to the Creator, producing a relation between both, operative on each, in a manner truly wonderful; and, not satisfied with this, running with a salutary power into all the other relations connected with the character and state of man: A principle this, which, while defined, and enlightened, and strengthened by revelation, (for how should deism effect all this?) may seem to be one of his chief guides through the long and mazy course of his hopeful existence.

But love to God is, in every view, by far still more important. Many writers on the Evidences—such as Savonarola, Abbadie, Hartley, and Joyce—have not forgotten to improve this subject, though, for the most part, but cursorily, to the purpose for which they wrote. And whoever will have recourse to their pages, particularly those of the excellent author last named, will be convinced, that the subject is as inexhaustible as it is grand and delightful. Were its characters and relations brought out by the test of the common opinions, and other rules of inquiry to which we have adverted, we are disposed to believe, that, like the works of nature and of genius, it would shine still brighter and brighter at every fresh examination, and thus confirm the doctrine of its perfect adaptation as a principle of the moral system. The following remarks will tend, though slightly, to show, that notwithstanding it is new and supernatural, it strikes in with the general operations of that system as accurately as if it never had been severed from it.

Love to God, in the Scripture sense of the terms,—judging solely from the nature of the thing,—is, of all moral principles, the most excellent and illustrious; the most eminent for comprehensiveness, fitness, and power. We intuitively perceive it to be by far the most perfect of all our attachments. The gratitude, and other noble sentiments of which, it is presumed, it essentially consists, modified and expanded by its infinite object, must render it, beyond all doubt, the most vigorous and delightful impulse to religious obedience; and the mutual

charity and benevolence which this love must inspire into the minds of all who are its genuine subjects,—admitting, for the sake of argument, that such persons may be found,—cannot fail to have the happiest effect in forming and directing every other virtue of the character. Such is the unequalled excellence of love, still supposing it to exist at all. Nor can it possibly be otherwise, consistently with the supposition. This grand principle must, therefore, be as worthy of its Infinite Author as the centripetal law of the planets, which assists in preserving the balance of the universe.

Nor let it be objected, that as God exists unseen by man, he cannot, therefore, be the object of human affection; for if, by means of his works, and his words, and his providence, we are duly impressed with a sense of his majestic, and gracious, and all-pervading presence, we may as certainly be moved to a suitable and sublime regard for his own Divine Person, as in ordinary life we feel attached to a friend, from witnessing his virtues, which we can see only in their effects, and not in the abstract. Who ever saw the human soul? Yet is not this frequently the object of a rational and ardent love?

The deist will, perhaps, reply, that he can love God in the contemplation of his works, without the aid of revelation. But we ask, How can he discover, through this imperfect medium, those interesting, and amiable, and unambiguous perfections of Divine goodness, which alone can excite our love? This boasting student of nature, while Christians on the morning of the holy sabbath meet to worship God, bends his walk to the fields, where he marks with professed admiration the beneficence of the Creator; but, probably, on his return a tempest rises, and in a moment his power of vision, or, perhaps, half his being, is blasted by the lightning, which, for aught he knows to the contrary, is flashing forth in anger. What now is the consolation of this philosophical and sentimental worshipper? Does nature give a satisfactory explanation of the painful fact, and teach that God is merciful, that dying pangs are emendatory, and that death is to be followed by a blissful immortality? Has he now abundant cause for the exercise of love? of that supreme attachment which results from communion with the reconciled God and Father of all our mercies? of that love, which the whole economy of the Gospel is directly designed and adapted to inspire?

The Scripture doctrine of this love seems, therefore, worthy of that God from whom the Bible was avowedly received, and consonant to the reason and moral wants of mankind, as plainly appears in the living experiments to which the principle is said to have been reduced. We, therefore, judge it to be founded in the truth and structure of things; and repeat, that it is as certainly derived from God, as any law of the solar system; not existing, it is true, in the present uncorrected state of man; but a necessary and admirable addition to that state.

Now, is not love, as we have said, the noblest and most powerful spring of moral obedience? Instance in subjects, or children, or servants. And may we not conclude, that love to God—still supposing it exists—is in itself most reasonable, most consistent, and most valuable? Who will say that such love, if fully operative, would fail to promote our perfect holiness? Is it not directed towards a God who has enjoined what infidels themselves allow to be incomparably the sublimest and purest morality? And is not this love combined, to give it efficacy, with the conscious fact of the omnipresence of Him who is its object? The very characters in which the Scriptures have presented us with its full exemplification,—St. Paul, St. John, and our blessed Lord himself,—strike us as just, and lovely, and as perfectly possible, considering the means by which those characters were professedly constructed.

If the reader would now choose, as an exercise of mind, as well as with a view to the argument, to apply all those of the common opinions, mentioned in the third section, which are evidently applicable to this subject;—opinions concerning good, and pleasure, and just, and honourable, and these, for the most part, absolutely and comparatively considered;—or any other maxims, incontrovertible, and descriptive of good, and the rest; he will soon, as we conceive, be fully convinced, that this principle of love has a real, not an imaginary, excellence of a very high and extraordinary character; and that it proves itself to have a real, not a fancied, divinity for its object;—a God who alone could be the source, and measure, and pattern, of such excellence; and to have also, in the Holy Scriptures, an account of its nature, and properties, and history, as Divine and as extraordinary as itself.

For if the container be greater than the thing contained; and

the latter, in the present case, be beyond the reach of man to invent; the Book which involves it, in connexion with many other principles, equally great and excellent,—or rather, the whole of those principles themselves, of which love to God is but a part,—must also be the work of ONE who is more than human.

As to the use of the opinions, we may observe, for example, that, in regard to good, it is said to be "that which we love for itself; and that for which we love somewhat else; and that to every man which his reason dictates; and that which satisfies." Now, these conditions, to mention no more, are eminently applicable to the love in question. We love God for his own sake, because he is the highest excellence. For the same sake, —that is, in loving obedience to his authority, with a grateful view to promote his glory, and in order to be like him, and attain to his kingdom,—we love our fellow-creatures, we love his works, we love his service. And nothing is more evidently the dictate of reason than love to Him who is infinitely amiable, and to whom we stand so intimately related. And that this love is satisfying of itself, and leads to things which satisfy, is equally evident, both from these views of the Deity, and from the nature of this love as an emotion and also as a principle. Pleasure is said to be a sudden and sensible motion of the soul towards her own natural state. Pleasant, therefore, is that which is the cause of such motion; and that which is not compulsory is pleasant; and acquired habits are pleasant, because they become natural.

But man must have been originally formed to love God. This love is, therefore, the most delightful element of every well-constituted mind. In this view it is the most unnatural, and, consequently, the most miserable thing in the world, to hate God. As there is, also, a sense in which acquired tastes are stronger than natural; this love has the advantage, not only of being natural, in regard to man's original formation; but also of being acquired, as superinduced on his present imperfect nature. And as it is quite easy and unconstrained to love at all, so it must be eminently so to love with the highest kind of love. And whatever as a means produces this love, and the love itself, as producing the natural state of the soul, must be pleasant; considerations which uniformly answer to experience.

Then as to just and equitable: It is according to these that we do not too rigorously punish errors, mischances, and evils done to us; that we remember better the good than the ill received; and that we endure injuries patiently. Love to God is necessarily reflected in love to man; and it is obvious, that Christian charity leads the mind with great power to these, and other practices of justice and fairness.

Love to God must also be honourable, if the virtues are so intrinsically; and if the causes of things honourable are also honourable. For it would be easy to show, that this love is the queen of all the virtues, and that nothing has been a more fruitful cause of honourable transactions.

If we come to comparatives, and say, "That is greater which causes the greater good, or proceeds from a greater good;" and add, "Greater is that which is chosen for itself, than that which is chosen for somewhat else; and the end is greater than that which is not the end;" the application of these opinions to this love will be obvious at once.

Let this love, indeed, be viewed in every imaginable shape and aspect, and though it is manifestly distinct from any thing discernible in the moral system of nature, yet it furnishes, as hinted above, a most desirable addition to it; exactly answers its demands, corrects and exalts it; and harmonizes both with its immediate and ultimate intentions, in a manner which demonstrates at once the contrivance and beneficence of the Infinite Author of the universal system.

A second observation greatly heightens this evidence. Why, —as Mr. Joyce has fully noticed in his beautiful work on love to God,—why was not this matchless principle promulged by the Heathen philosophers? Were they not men of admirable acuteness and research? the light and glory of the most polished and cultivated nations of antiquity? the sources and repositories of science and of learning? Was it possible,—supposing it had been within the reach of human strength,—that they should fail to elicit a discovery so important, and so long the prime object of their ardent inquiry? The few glimmering speculations, we may observe by the way, which they have left us on the subject, only argue, that, at least, it is rationally conceivable, is necessary to human perfection, and is, therefore, quite consonant to our moral constitution.

Now, let us cast our eye on the eastern boundary of the

Mediterranean. Here we behold a country not much larger than the county of York, inhabited by a people insulated from the rest of the world, entirely different from every other nation, in laws, religion, customs, and manners; uninstructed by learning, and particularly unadorned by artificial civilization; despised and contemned as a clan of ignorant barbarians. Yet this people are in possession of the very doctrine which all the philosophers had sedulously sought in vain, and which is destined to give perfection to the character of man. How is this? Must we believe that they enjoyed it as the natural fruit of their own unparalleled investigation? The solution is most evident, as the above-named excellent author clearly shows. It came from heaven, from that God of whom alone so admirable a gift is infinitely worthy.

Nor must the wickedness of the Jewish nation be brought against this doctrine, as an argument to prove its inefficiency, and that, therefore, it could not come from God. For, in the first place, though we must allow it was not generally submitted to by the Jews in their practice, yet this cannot possibly affect the inference of its supernatural derivation, which is supposed, as above, by the intrinsic and indisputable superiority of this love, in connexion with the fact, that the doctrine concerning it is only to be found in the Sacred Writings of that people. And, secondly, the command to "love God with all the heart," like any other excellent law, Divine or human, may be resisted by the will of man, without any impeachment of its excellence; for the precepts of religion were never intended, nor in the nature of things could they be fitted, to force the reason of free agents, as attraction causes motion, and as instinct irresistibly determines the character of animals.

Observe, as a third evidence on this subject of love, that the Scriptures alone give a rational and satisfactory account of our loss of this great principle. That men, instead of loving God, are at enmity against him, is most evident. Where, indeed, is the class of deists who love, and praise, and serve God, agreeably to the suggestions of their own reason,—to the admitted principles of their own system? I say nothing of positive infractions of morality. The negative part of their character is sufficient to condemn them, in common with the rest of mankind. But we cannot suppose that this enmity was any part or principle of the first man, when he proceeded from

the hands of his immaculate Creator: "The same fountain cannot send forth both sweet waters and bitter."

What feasible account, then, can be given of the annihilation of this love, this essence of true piety, and of the general diffusion of this rooted and horrid opposition to infinite excellence? I speak not of the Divine reasons for suffering its existence, but simply of the mode and circumstances of its first rise and establishment in the human mind. The former of these two subjects lies secret in the bosom of God; nor do practical purposes require him to reveal it. The latter is of great importance to be clearly understood by all who are interested in the process of redemption. But what absurd and conflicting theories have been offered to explain this mystery!

The true account is that of hereditary depravation, God having to a great degree justly abandoned human nature to the consequences of its own wild and uncorrected course. Nor is this unjust or improbable. We are not surprised that the infant family of an attainted nobleman are ruined by his crimes, or that disease, and poverty, and ignominy are inherited by multitudes, from their libertine progenitors; yet the sufferance of the fall, as here explained, is not one whit more unrighteous, as an arrangement of Providence; especially when we take into view the provision of the Gospel, by which it is secured, that no one shall die the second death for the personal sin of Adam,—that a gracious possibility exists of cutting off the eternal penalty of sin. We therefore conclude, that the Scripture narrative of our original loss of love to God, (a narrative which is not found in any other ancient writing,) proves itself to be derived from the proper sources,—uncorrupted tradition and Divine revelation.

Had the manner in which evil was at first introduced been determinable by the wit of man, it might have been expected, that some of the giant minds of antiquity would have enlightened the world by some metaphysical demonstration, on so great and interesting a subject. But as it is abundantly accounted for by matter-of-fact, and this, too, of such a nature as could not have been conveyed to us, except by supernatural means; it seems fair to conclude, that the Book which contains this account is a revelation sent from God. To invent a story like this for purposes of falsehood or amusement,—a tale consisting

of incidents so sparingly put forth, so singular in themselves, so artlessly yet so harmoniously consorted, and answering so exactly to the wisdom, and justice, and goodness of God, and to the nature and circumstances of mankind,—would have been, indeed, a most extraordinary coincidence.

In the fourth place, it is by the Bible, and by this alone, that we are fully instructed how to recover this lost "pearl" of love to God. And here again we perceive the most scrupulous regard to the actual state of man. He is considered as depraved beyond the reach of common remedies. No metaphysical and intricate scheme of moral culture is enjoined, for the purpose of rekindling this extinguished flame of love. It is now quenched, and is neither active nor latent in the nature of man. No finite agency can strike it again into existence. Like the holy fire of the first temple, it must be received from heaven. As, when the vital spark has fled from the body, cold, and quickly dissolving, no new motions impressed upon it, no attempts to re-animate its confused materials, or to urge afresh its sleeping fluids, can at all succeed in calling back the principle of life; so, love to God, which is the essence of his living image in the soul, can never be restored by any process merely human. The whole history of governments, of civil cultivation, and of philosophic morals, proves the truth of this position.

The Scriptures, therefore, point us to a very different class of measures,—measures which, when rightly adopted, justify the sublime declaration, that the Gospel, which unfolds them, is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." This is rational; it exhibits a proportion between means and their purposes; it brings us back to Omnipotence, that we may undergo a "new creation;" and this by a method singularly just and merciful, a method which includes a vast variety of subordinate means and motives, admirably fitted to accomplish their professed design. The whole scheme, to say the least, so far as reason can decipher it, is consistent with itself; a circumstance which we should not expect to find in any fiction of an extraordinary breadth and variety.

And where we cannot comprehend the subject, satisfactory reasons can be given why we are not informed, suggested solely by the nature and circumstances of the scheme. Deism can give no good reasons why we should be so ignorant on thousands of subjects, evidently of high importance to be known by man,

at some period of his being; and for the knowledge of which he ardently pants, not from idle curiosity, but from a natural thirst after truth.

This scheme, indeed, would not have been adverted to by philosophers, it implies so much of supernatural interference with the nature of man, of which they are always uncommonly jealous. Good men would not have attempted to effect even the greatest human happiness by means of so prodigious a series of falsehoods as the doctrines of infidelity charge upon the Scriptures. And who will say, that men of extreme superstition—a quality which, even in its lower degrees, narrows the intellect, and blights the finest feelings of the heart—could furnish out a plan, including in its boundless range so much of practical wisdom, of sublime invention, and of simple, yet majestic, composition; a plan so deeply interwoven with the principles of human nature, and so precisely fitted, if rightly received, to advance, at least, the highest temporal interests of the world? Here superstition is supposed to do what the greatest and the best of men are presumed, from their honesty and reason, to be incapable of doing. We need not teach the reader to mark this absurdity.

The conclusion is evident,—that a remedy so varied, so widely removed from the natural thinkings of mankind, and withal so perfectly adapted to achieve its own avowed intentions, must have been derived from Him who is the "only wise God," and to whom "are known all his works from the beginning."

VI. HARMONY OF THE SUBJECTS.

This conclusion is still farther confirmed by the whole of these remarks, examined in their mutual connexion.

This leads us to touch on the harmony of the system, which seems, indeed, to be essential to the perfect excellence of the parts. The alleged falsehood of the Scriptures, if truly charged, must be capital, affecting the whole strain of the Book, and the great majority of its facts. Still, indeed, certain portions of its moral might be accurately devised, as drawn from the obvious nature and condition of man. But how all beyond this should exhibit, on the score of fiction, a system so peculiar, and so well jointed in its parts; how the forgers of the Book should first invent the character of a God, drawn out to such a length, and clothed with so much grandeur; should then require their dupes to love him with their loftiest affection, with such a kind of love

as was never known before, and which, if attainable, must elevate the character of its subjects at once, and lead them on to the most perfect and sublime virtue of which man is capable on earth; that they should show, (what the nature of the case, indeed, demanded to be shown,) why this love was not now found on earth, how it once existed and by what a most extraordinary yet feasible transaction it was lost; and how at last they should devise a complex means for its recovery, to appearance equally possible, and dove-tailed into the lamentable narrative with so much nicety and precision; and that all this should be prosecuted through the entire volume, without tripping, at least without confounding the contour of the fiction, and making it a monster; it would be difficult, I think, very difficult, to say.

Let me not be told, that the "Iliad" is some such sort of fiction. He who makes the observation ought to know the essential difference between poetical and historical probability. The poet never intended that great work to be believed as truth, and no man ever received it with any such conviction. The moment it is offered to the mind in such a light, it becomes a ridiculous and senseless distortion.

He observes, again, that the Bible is composed of a multitude of tracts written by different men, at different times, in different countries. This, no deist has ever yet been known to dispute. Indeed, his own theory of the gradual imposition of the supposed forgery on mankind, requires this admission. Now, that all these men, without collusion, should sustain this vast scheme from age to age, with so much of agreement, each keeping his eye on the doctrine of love to God, the regulating centre of his motions; one part of the Book detailing the loss of this great treasure, but anticipating its recovery; and numerous other portions looking back upon this fact, and expounding it consistently; unfolding the plan at large, which at first appeared in broken hints; but still holding up this doctrine as an universal light, reflected and refracted in a thousand different forms, like the same sun, variously presented by the earth, and ocean, and the atmosphere; and that each man all the while should be completely conscious, as he must be, that he was turned into a fool and a villain for his pains, because guilty of constructing what infidelity accounts, while admiring its morality, the most mischievous of all systems;—that all this, we say, should actually

occur, may be believed, indeed, by the deist; but he really must not tell us that he is a perfect sceptic, and hates all credulity.

The foregoing argument is capable of great extension, and might be advantageously conducted through the whole subject of the Bible, presenting a prodigious number of minute and harmonious ramifications; all running into one another, sometimes directly, sometimes by singular and unexpected deflections; sometimes from points nearly adjoined to each other, and sometimes from vast distances; but always preserving that kind of exact correspondency, with which truth and contrivance are invariably distinguished. This we should be disposed to call a "demonstration," at least in the popular sense of the word, as implying a high and satisfactory degree of evidence.

We are aware it will be said, that, after all, this is nothing more than presumptive evidence. But presumptive evidence is so called, at least, in many instances, not to distinguish it from insufficient, but from direct, proof. The term may point to its specific difference, and not to the degree of its force. Presumptive evidence, in court, of a transaction, is in certain cases amazingly strong; and where direct proof cannot be had, it is sometimes acted on, even where the consequence is awfully important. This implies the possibility, though not the constant occurrence, of adequate strength connected with presumptive evidence. And if, in legal cases, the weight of the whole is in proportion to the number of presumptions, each adding a degree of still farther credibility to the rest, the evidence is much more powerful in a question like the present, where the lights of probability, the coincidences, for example, are multiplied beyond all bounds. Let the intelligent and unprejudiced reader judge, whether presumptive evidence was ever raised so high as in the question of the truth of Divine revelation.

His mind must, indeed, be strangely constituted, and one would think not much to be envied, who can resist the evidence of the present argument, solely because it is not positive; especially as, in the affairs of life, he must often act upon a class of probabilities far less numerous and less weighty. Should he carry this scepticism into full effect, he must be in perpetual terror from the possibility of his falling by the dagger of a murderer, while walking in the streets, at noon-day. He dared not

step into a coach for Brighton, lest the coachman, in a fit of insanity, should forthwith drive him directly into the sea.

But the following illustration may still more clearly show the nature and force of the reasoning here employed, not only in regard to useful adaptations, but also as to the harmonies in the general structure of revealed truth.

Am I completely ignorant, that there is on earth the shadow of such an art as that of the mariner? I bend my steps to the shore, and perceive an immense but compacted pile of wood, just floating on the wave. I am told it is the hull of a ship, of considerable tonnage, and that its design is to bring invaluable treasures from some land beyond the sea. "But how do you mean to convey so large a body to so great a distance?" It is jestingly replied, "By oars, to be sure." I ask, "What are oars?" They are described to me, with the assurance, that certain great people of ancient times, called Greeks and Romans, used them with success. I begin to think it quite possible, from the nature of resistance and of motion, that the vessel should be thus transported.

Some days after, and on some adjoining part of the coast, I perceive a singular but confused apparatus of lengthened poles, and ropes, and canvass, scattered on the ground. I study them with intense curiosity; but, for my life, I cannot comprehend their uses. On inquiry, I am informed, that they are intended to be reared in a certain arrangement on the surface of the said hull, with a view to her more speedy passage through the waters, by means of the wind. This is a flash of light upon the mass of materials which lie before me. I can now clearly perceive the use of the most important parts of them, merely through the explanation given me; though many instruments, I still find, I cannot fully understand, from any description.

Subsequently, I see the whole applied to the vessel; and now my conviction and admiration of their uses are increased; and other portions, previously useless, as far as I could then judge, begin to appear essential to the rest. Finally, I step on board to make the experiment. The wind blows, the canvass is prepared to receive it, and this new locomotive world, to my amazement, moves onward through the ocean, in a style of rapidity and majesty which, perhaps, I should have been disposed to discredit as fictitious, had I only known it in the representations of another person. I now in my own knowledge

find the use of every thing, from the cable to the slightest cord, and from the mainsail to the smallest sheet that flutters to the breeze.

In this little parable, we think we see the subject of our argument. Our frail nature, while deprived of revelation, is like a naked bark floating on the dangerous deep, idly, and without an aim, because destitute of that high and regulated impulse by which it might gain a port. Let revelation be supplied, and what before was nearly motionless, or urged at random by some pitiful expedients, devised by ignorance itself, makes way through life's rough sea, like a vessel fully furnished with strong and skilfully-constructed masts and rigging, for some voyage of great importance.

If we contemplate the Bible without a due regard to the tendency and design of the whole, and of all its parts respectively, we shall perhaps erroneously condemn it, as an ignorant man might look upon a ship's tackling, when laid apart from the vessel, as nothing but a senseless mass of confusion. But if we carefully consider the entire case, the nature of man, soul and body, all the circumstances of his surrounding situation, the fitness of the Scriptures throughout their varieties, successively explained, like the tackling, to carry forward human nature to an eternal perfection ; we shall perceive in this general combination, but particularly in the multitude and nicety of instances in a minute application, infinitely more of system, of skilful mechanism and contrivance, as well as of important design, than can possibly be discerned in that entire case which we have attempted to figure out ; the water for the vessel, and the vessel for the water ; the hull for the tackling, and the tackling for the hull ; and both these for the wind ; with the perfect adjustment of all the subordinate instruments ; comprising an arrangement in the whole, which, while rightly considered or experienced, is found to contain no fiction ; but which might, no doubt, at least in some of its essential parts, be laughed at, as if it were considered in that light supposing it to be seen in a state of disruption, or through the narrative of another, unexplained by experience.

When we must go to sea, we shall choose to take the voyage in a vessel well-rigged. Let the deist despise the equipment, and drift away, without either rudder, or compass, or sails, or oars.

Arguments resembling this, drawn from the fitness and the harmony of the subjects, might be taken respectively from each and all of the virtues which the Gospel inspires, and which it modifies and elevates into a character of perfection, unknown to the infidel, and to the false professor of the Christian religion; from Christian purity of heart, spiritual joy, communion with God, forgiveness of injuries, love to enemies, religious meekness, humility, self-denial; and from all those excellences which are super-human in the genuine believer, and which result from Christianity, viewed as a Divine life. These all run regularly through the Sacred Volume. They are component parts of a limited religious system, which is itself a part of the universal system. They harmonize with each other; and each, and the whole collectively, with, at least, the avowed perfections and purposes of God; with the nature of man, whether viewed as fallen, and obviously in want of such attainments to complete his existence; or as restored, and standing out to view, arrayed in all this surpassing perfection and glory; and, indeed, with every imaginable principle, and parcel, and circumstance of the universe. But with the whole of this great scene the opposite vices, and infidelity itself, when carried onward to its consequences, are at irreconcilable hostility; while what is called morality, in the mere lover of the world, comes infinitely short of the manifest relations to the whole, which man, as a great central agent, ought practically to recognise.

The harmony of the virtues named above is seen, not merely in the doctrinal and descriptive manner in which they are sketched out, to the contemplation of the mind, by the pen of revelation; it also appears in their operative agreement as inherent in the living character. We have already selected one or two for special notice; but look at the whole together. Is there any disproportion or revulsion among them? Is there the least deficiency or discrepancy connected with them, provided they are just such virtues as the Gospel requires? Do not their several principles live in undisturbed union in the same breast, like the several laws of gravitation, cohesion, electricity, &c. in the same material world? And can wind, and sun, and rain, more consentaneously contribute to fertility, than these admirable virtues mutually tend to the perfection and happiness of mankind?

These remarks receive some force from the circumstance, that love to enemies, which men of the world in every age have seemed to think unjust and impracticable, is as completely adapted to promote this most benevolent design, as any simple virtue in the whole enumeration.

But we need not limit our inquiry to such doctrines, or other subjects, as are strictly peculiar to revelation, and far beyond the reach of unassisted nature. This kind of reasoning may be applied to the Scriptures throughout, as containing an immense assemblage of the most beautiful and perfect harmonies, and thus evincing their Divine contrivance and truth.

The adaptations pointed out in the former sections are all most perfect harmonies. This adds to their argumentative force; because, though an instrument may sometimes answer a valuable purpose, for which it was not originally intended, as one may cross a river on a loose piece of timber, yet this can hardly be supposed in the present instance. The scheme of revelation seems to have been constructed most accurately and precisely, with a view to effect the ends for which it is said to have been designed. There is, consequently, a preconceived and perfect, not an incidental and imperfect, plan perceptible throughout. The wisdom, therefore, as well as the goodness, of its author, contributes to the strength of the proof we wish to adduce.

Analogy is harmony. It is sometimes, indeed, but feeble as to argument, unless when supported by other reasons. Still it has much weight when thus accompanied; and at all times its beauty sheds a lustre on the path of evidence. The numerous analogies contained in Butler, Barton, and Gisborne, all tend to evince an identity in the origin, and character, and scope of the joint systems of nature and of revelation. It would be gratifying to see these analogies all marshalled as auxiliaries to the present argument. But this is not absolutely necessary to ensure success. We must leave the full inquiry to the choice and leisure of the reader.

The means appointed in Scripture for the acquirement of any one, or all, of the Christian virtues harmoniously conjoin for that purpose. Reading, hearing, meditating on the Divine Word; prayer, trust, and thanksgiving; all these, in their own nature,—moral philosophers themselves being the judges,—are also known from experience to be admirably fitted to excite and fan what the Church of England, in her Ordination Service,

finely calls, "the fire of love;" that is, of love to God. Could any thing so coherent be found in devotedness to the Heathen gods? Has the deist any arrangement of worship equally rational, and powerful, and consistent?

It deserves observation, that, while the great and leading objects of our life are required to be,—to advance the glory of the Creator, the good of others, and our own happiness, the whole three are perfectly promoted by precisely the same system of conduct. He who rightly aims at any one of these, must necessarily be carried forward to the other two. They move on in equal march, mutually supporting each other; and when one is interrupted, the rest, as if by some irresistible sympathy, are instantly at a stand.

The infidel, perhaps, will say, to affirm the consistency of his own scheme, that this applies to pure deism. Be it so. But the religion and character of the Christian, he will allow, are essentially different from those of the deist, of opposite principles, and much more extensive in their range. Now, if the beautiful harmony, just mentioned, be found to run through the whole of the Christian system, then here we have, whatever may be said of deism, a proof that the God of nature is also the God of the Bible. It is, however, scarcely necessary to add, that there cannot be the same harmony in both these religions, since, if one be true, the other must be false.

We have only, indeed, to mark out for examination any single character, or fact, or truth contained in the Bible, and we shall soon see how regularly and beautifully it radiates itself; uniformly preserving the level of its own beams, however crossed by other lights, or obscured by passing clouds. And the same symmetry and ascendancy are equally discernible in a subject of immense variety, as in the history of the Jews; and in one of a narrower extent, as, for instance, the minor predictions of Christ. In these, such as his declarations respecting the resurrection of Lazarus, the denial of Peter, and his own passion, the event always answers the prediction, occurring most naturally in the succession of facts, and in the structure of the narratives. Nor is there the least internal appearance of forgery in the plain and unaffected accounts which record them. Homer himself would have failed in the attempt to construct so feasible, though limited, a fiction, as the alleged one of the public and private life of Christ.

The correctness of the geography, and the truth of the profane history, profusely scattered through the volume, coinciding with each other, and with the sacred transactions to which they are linked;—the consistency of Scripture with the discoveries of modern science, such as geology and natural history;—the originality, the admirable simplicity, energy, and general excellence of the theocratical form of government;—the devotional sentiments of both Testaments, discovering kindred properties, and in undisturbed union among themselves; all resulting from the facts and doctrines of the Books, and from the nature of man, corrected and elevated by a Divine religion; and all re-acting on those facts and doctrines, to confirm and expound them;—the exact correspondencies between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, in their leading principles and purposes;—the prophecies, and their fulfilment, considered simply as exhibiting coincidences of the composition, apart from the knowledge of futurity which they demonstrate;—the miracles, as consisting of another subordinate scheme of coalescing properties; as proofs of Divine interference and omnipotence; as designed to prove the truth of Christianity; as acts of benevolence; as helps to hope and faith; as intended figures of the force of grace to heal the soul; as probable in themselves, considering the power and intentions of the Deity; as consistent with each other, with every other part of Scripture, and with Providence in general;—the suitableness of the several compositions to the minds and habits of the respective authors; instance, Isaiah, Amos, and St. Paul;—the numerous characters, whether sketched or finished, with their appropriate passions, sentiments, and manners;—above all, the absolute originality of the character of Christ, and the perfect adaptation of its multitudinous and wonderful attributes to serve the ends of the redeeming scheme, whether true or false;—a character, moreover, drawn, in the several sections of it, by Moses, and the prophets, and in the Psalms; which sections, when conjoined, have been justly compared to a portrait painted in glass, consisting of separable divisions, yet exhibiting a beautiful unity;—these are some of the many general harmonies of Scripture which seem to preclude the possibility of the wildness of fancy, and the wickedness of forgery, as at all concerned in the composition.

To all this we may add the circumstance of a singular and extraordinary character, frequently belonging to certain branches,

and thereby rendering the alleged fictitiousness of the whole so much the more difficult and improbable. The extreme peculiarity of the ritual of Aaron, and its dissimilitude, in things extrinsical, to the Gospel dispensation, which it was designed to shadow forth;—the singularity and mysteriousness of the prophetic terms and symbols, in which, notwithstanding, the lineaments are clearly perceived, at least, of the future writings which contain the fulfilment of the things predicted;—and the mean and ignominious circumstances with which the sublime character of Christ is invested, and of which an inventor would not, probably, have thought;—these are some of the numerous particulars which strengthen our argument, and give a refutation of the idea, that the Book is a fiction. Nay, the very alliance with each other of these dissimilarities is founded in propriety, as is clearly perceivable when they are carefully examined; dissimilarities obviously necessary and proper to carry forward the proposed design of the whole.

Again: The discoveries of the Bible harmonize with reason, so far as we can understand them; and yet reason was never known to make the least approach, without the help of this Divine guide, to the knowledge of such things. How strange it appears, to a mind not darkened and deadened by the frequency of the facts, that nature should uniformly bear innumerable marks of curse and abandonment; that, for instance, the world should be a scene of ruggedness and tempest, of sickness and poverty, and should be swept of its aged population every thirty or forty years! Our reason and our taste instruct us, that, strictly speaking, this is not a natural state of things. Man is utterly diverted from his proper character and place; his mind the source and prey of endless errors and vices, and his body bandaged by apparel, to defend him from the outrageous innovations which the blasts of the atmosphere are constantly making on tranquillity and pleasure; just as the horse is taken from the green meadow, and cooped up in the mines, and blanketed, and pushed beyond his strength, and fed on dry provender. The projected renovation of the universe appears, in the numerous parts respectively of that grand design, to answer to its counterpart in the actual state of things, as a building, in its various apartments and furniture, answers, with general preciseness, to the wants of its inhabitants; to answer to the hopes and fears, the love and hatred, and other moral properties of man; to our

taste, in proportion as it is unfolded and freshened by cultivation, in an exquisite sense of beauty and of grandeur, whether as belonging to the mental or material world; and to the known intrinsic and essential principle of our indefinite improvement, our longings after a sublimer and more permanent existence.

The enmity and folly of infidels, which are clearly involved in their opposition to Christianity, are predicted and accounted for in the very Book which they impugn. It is vain to deny the charge of this unfair opposition. That such prejudiced hostility exists, it would be easy to demonstrate. For instance: Let this wonderful Book be called "a fiction;" still, what is to be said of the contemptuous undervaluation and neglect with which they treat it, while the fables of the ancient poets, and the tales of modern novel-writers, are continually in their hands? Why this palpable oversight of its superior beauties? And why the eternal bitterness and scorn, with which its fancied faults are minutely marked out for universal reprobation? Why no candid admiration of its elevated morality? Why no abstract of this morality published by deists, with the benevolent view to benefit society? Why no expressed wish that the Scriptures might be true? Why neglect the inquiry altogether? Or if, when entered upon, why conduct it with such flippancy and banter, and not with serious and courteous argumentation?

Once more: The Holy Scriptures contain an immense assemblage of means, successive and collateral, many of them temporary ends of subordinate importance; all observing a beautiful, and, in different degrees, a separately-important relation to each other, like the digestive and other intermingled and tributary systems of the bodily frame; and all bearing onwards, like waves rolling toward the same shore, upon one grand end,—an end, the loftiest and the best that created minds can possibly conceive. Were the whole a perfect fiction, it would be curious to know, how this coherence could be so admirably preserved throughout so vast a multiplicity and variety of instances. The whole picture, indeed, though extensive, and endlessly minute, is in perfect keeping, as far, at least, as we can understand its details, and enter into its spirit. And if there are inexplicable and apparently superfluous parts, they do not prejudice the general design; and are no more justly objectionable than certain portions of our animal economy, the use of which no anatomist has yet been able to determine. The several writers could no

more furnish for themselves this principle of harmonious coalescence in composing the Book, admitting it to be a fiction, than a vast flock of birds of passage could devise and create the wondrous instinct, by which they are impelled to assemble from many different quarters, at a certain time and place, to take their associated flight across the ocean.

It deserves remark, that the various kinds of evidence employed to prove the truth of Christianity are, in general, quite consistent with each other. The historical and the internal evidence, that from prophecy and from miracles, with the different modifications of each, which have been so ably prosecuted by the advocates of the cause, are not conflicting, but coalescing, schemes. They communicate and receive a joint support among themselves, in many important instances, on which we cannot here allow ourselves to expatiate. For example: A supernatural interference, by prophecy and miracle, demanded a corresponding majesty and importance in the subject, and the internal evidence most obviously fulfils the demand. Similar observations might be made on all the other combinations which might be formed of the several kinds of proof here adverted to. Nothing more than a brief hint is here intended, respecting this particular species of harmony. The reader may speculate, for his own satisfaction, on any number of the combinations, as his genius and wishes may direct. For this purpose he may extend the inquiry, by carefully consulting some general view of the Evidences, such as may be found in the volumes of Hartley, Horne, Macardy, and the excellent compendium contained in the first volume of the Rev. Richard Watson's "Theological Institutes."

The evidence adduced in the rejection of the Bible is of a very different character. Nothing can be more discordant and versatile. On one point, however, there is a perfect agreement,—the design to resist revelation. Its opposite bendings, to accomplish this one purpose, are clearly demonstrative of strong prejudice. For instance, as observed by a good writer: When it combats the necessity of revelation, reason can do every thing, even for the bulk of mankind; but when the evidence of revelation is to be distinguished from imposture, reason can do nothing. But this design assumes the most heterogeneous grounds;—sometimes atheism, and sometimes deism. Infidelity has no system, either true or fictitious. One party affirms that Jesus Christ was an impostor, and worked his miracles by

magic; another, that he was a deceived, superstitious, well-meaning man; and a third declares positively, that no such person ever existed,—that the term "Christ" is only a corruption of "Creeshna," the name of an Indian Deity.

We may observe, by the way, the singular ingenuity of this last conjecture. Great linguists tell us, that "Christ" means "anointed," and "Creeshna" "black;" but now, forsooth, we may boldly ask, What signifies the recondite sense? The sound has always been considered a most obvious rule of derivation! Who does not see that "oyster" comes from "austere," an adjective; which marks the rigour with which those little creatures close their shells to prevent their being opened? And what doubt can be advanced against so clear a truth as this,—that the verb "to hang" is derived from "Hungus," the twentieth Pictish king? This is demonstrated by an historical fact, which triumphantly confirms the theory;—that prince, failing in some important treaty with Malcolm, king of Scotland, did actually hang himself!

The strange notions here referred to, with many others, equally wild, from the same romantic author, are very ably confuted in a valuable work, lately published, entitled, "Remarks on Volney's Ruins of Empires, by W. A. Hails," of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Thus, whether we contemplate the structure of the Scriptures as a writing, greatly varied in its materials and styles; styles, original, simple, yet never mean and creeping, and each uniformly preserved to the last;—or that of the grand and multiforms ystem of religion which it exhibits, with its different but consistent and co-operating evidences; or the harmony of all these with the universe, so far as we can comprehend it; a most beautiful coincidence, we perceive, is every where discovered, a mutual fitness of parts, that strikes the more forcibly, the more minutely and narrowly the subject is investigated.

No other book, well known to be a work of fiction, or of forgery, could bear the touch of such a test. And it ought to be observed, that no other book, composed from fancy, consists of so large a collection of distinct pieces, on so many, and so difficult, and so different subjects, written by different men, at different times; a circumstance which makes this whole train of reasoning an argument *a fortiori* in favour of the Bible.

VII. OBJECTIONS.

The expertness of infidelity, in offering repeatedly the same stale objections, is well known. The talents and success with which they have all been minutely and fully answered, are equally undeniable. And there is a third thing, which the whole history of the contest proves with no less certainty,—the total omission to rejoin in closely grappling with these answers, or, indeed, to rejoin at all. Still, the friends of revelation must go on in their dispassionate but firm defence of so great a cause; anticipating such objections as an hostile and perverted ingenuity may yet advance, to perplex, if not to conquer. Besides, there is an exalted satisfaction, and no small confirmation of our faith, in simply surveying the works constructed to secure us from the enemy. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God, for ever and ever."

One objection to our argument the deist will think very plain; —a direct and manifest opposition, in many important instances, and not an agreement, between nature and revelation. It will be said, the latter demands for duties,—self-denial, love of enemies, and a spiritual abstraction from the world; while nature urges just the contrary.

But we have shown, that revelation is adapted to nature, not as an indulgence, but as a remedy. Nature may be viewed in two respects, as perfect or imperfect, sound or corrupted. If in the latter, then whatever means may be employed as corrective, must work its effect by a principle of resistance, and by victory. Ought a physician to order luxuries where abstinence, and medicine, and regimen are wanting? The question is, whether what is censured by the Scriptures is really evil, and whether its destruction would not essentially promote our happiness? Besides, in this respect, reason, and the general regulations of society,—nay, deism itself, as well as Christianity, —are liable to the same charge, if charge it must be called, of frequently prohibiting the gratification of the sense and of the mind. The fitness in question owes its peculiar excellence to the very property which the objector condemns,—a property communicated in the planning wisdom of God, with the express design to answer a valuable purpose.

Again: It may be asked, "If such be the adaptations of the Christian scheme to the nature of man, why have not the metaphysicians, those judges of the mind, discovered this accordance?"

We reply, that there are instances of moral blindness, and of rejection of the truth, in this class of persons, as well as in other professions;—instances which go to prove the moral weakness and depravity of the brightest minds, as asserted in the Scriptures, and thus point out the very fitness of which we speak,—a fitness to enlighten the understanding in regard to its own corruption. Some philosophers will not take the pains to investigate the subject, and contemn the system which they have never studied, when they ought merely to reproach their own voluntary ignorance. Hume himself, a man of uncommon literature, confessed, as we before observed, that he had never read the whole of the New Testament. A repeated and careful contemplation of the parts he had perused is, therefore, not very probable. Such men are also frequently deceived by appearances of moral excellence in human nature. They are attracted by the beauty of its fragments, and forget that it is a ruin. Finding a fluted pillar here, and a flourished capital there, they dream the fabric is complete, and are lost in the praises of its ideal, as if it were actual, perfection. Sometimes, however, the existing deformity forces itself upon their notice; and Fontaine observes, "I fear nature has given to man a principle of malignity." Persons of this description are not likely to receive the plain and humiliating truths of the Bible.

But may we not ask, Why have not all philosophers perceived the fitness and excellence of deism? Or, is there really no weight of names, in the world of letters, against infidelity? How happens it, that the perfect adaptation of this grand, this matchless system, does not uniformly strike all men of true discernment with a sense of its superior claims?

After all, there are metaphysicians of the highest rank, who acknowledge the perfect suitableness of revelation to the state and structure of the human mind. We need hardly select, from the numerous list, the names of Bacon, and Milton, and Locke. But, perhaps, with the deist, these will only pass for weak men and fools. Whatever may, indeed, be said of the inefficiency of the Gospel to prevail with this or any other class of men, no argument will thence arise against the character

of the system, since reason, and conscience, and law, and natural affection,—and, again we will add, even deism, that unequalled scheme of truth, and power, and goodness,—have all failed to produce a perfect renovation in the state of the world.

Another objection relates to the manner in which the alleged forgery of the Bible may be supposed to have occurred. The infidel must allow, that there is at least, true or false, some general line of correspondence, and contrast, and opposition, between the system of nature and that of revelation. The first presents us with crime, the second offers pardon. The former abounds with misery and death; the latter speaks of the resurrection of the body, and of an eternal state of happiness. The other numerous instances must be present to the mind of the reader.

Now, the question is, How could all these have entered the imagination of an impostor? The deist will, perhaps, observe, that the real side of this line of contrasts might suggest the fictitious. Thus he admits, to some extent, the adaptations which we have all along attempted to prove. Yet even this seems too great a stretch for the genius of obscure men. But how shall we account for many portions of the Scripture-scheme, for which there is no apparent counterpart in nature, such as the doctrine of the Trinity? Besides, we have shown, that even as to the real side, there are characters and circumstances which could only have been learned from what we have called "the supposed fictitious side of the line;" instance, in the case of human depravity; the origin, and full extent, and bearing of which could never have been known without revelation. And this additional knowledge we find to be correct by looking back on nature, as observed before; and perceiving, in the undeniable facts and characters of nature, the truth of the information. How, then, could nature suggest such parts of the alleged imposture?

There are possibly some infidels who will say,—and the assertion would not be more absurd than many others on record by the party,—that all these correspondencies are merely the effect of accident. Accident! Did accident ever furnish out even the smallest organized part of a windmill? Could the half of any complex machine—say a watch—be supplied by accident? The supposed impostors sit down to write a false book, and having given full scope to their reveries, it is found

that they have produced an infinity of contrasts, resemblances, and parts and counterparts, the most profound and curious; to which, indeed, there is nothing similar, or equally indicative of powers of invention, in the whole range of poetical and novel-writing fancy! Is this to be believed? Was it in this wild exercise of human energies, that "Paradise Lost" was composed; or that the mighty apparatus for the building of London-bridge was constructed?

But another infidel—or perhaps the same—may, by some sudden change of opinion, ascribe this great effect to the matchless talent of the writers; for though sometimes they are denounced as fools and miserable scribblers, yet when a purpose must be served, they are found to be men of wonderful sagacity, and very ingenious authors.

We ask, Where did Moses and the apostles find the model of their scheme? Or, could poor, uneducated, obscure men, or, indeed, any men whatever, invent the whole of such a mighty plan? Whoever possessed the knowledge of human nature, of laws, of morals, and of human concerns in general, necessary to the creation of this stupendous fabric? As to the power, in particular, of imagining supernatural beings, how paltry is the genius of Shakspeare, compared with that of these supposed impostors! They were, no doubt, sensible men; but will this alone account for the prodigious range and depth of thought displayed in their writings?

Michaëlis mentions an Italian writer, who conjectures, that four superior persons in the fourth century might possibly invent the New Testament, and interpolate some passages in Tacitus and Suetonius, and forge all the Fathers! How prodigious is the credulity of the sceptic! One would expect to meet, in the works of this Italian, with the assertion, that Columbus invented America, made it, placed it in the Western Ocean; and then returned with a lie in his mouth, telling the people of Europe that he only discovered it!

Once more: The deist will urge, that our plan of trying Scripture, by its application to nature, is favourable to his own system; as it discovers, in his opinion, the inequality of the former to the wants of the latter, its many inconsistencies with reason and the existing state of things.

We have anticipated this objection in the outset of the argument, and, in part, supplied an answer to it, when speaking

of some inexplicable relations in the second section. The infidel objects to the entire system, because of apparent inconsistencies connected with a limited number of facts and doctrines. Should we admit these instances, there still would be an important balance in our favour, as the objection relates merely to certain details, and not to the substance and design of the whole. This design and this substance are, beyond all question, suited to the wants of nature; and quite within the limit of omnipotence to effect; and nothing better or nobler, as we have shown, can be imagined; and all this must be granted, whether revelation be truth or an imposture. Why, then, should particular cases overturn our conviction of the general excellence?

Will the friends of deism renounce their system, on account of the undeniable inconsistencies connected with it? For example: They oppose Christianity, because, among other reasons, it has not been universally made known. This, it appears, they consider a real objection. But does it not apply to their own five, or seven, or other number of articles? Are all men agreed on these; or do all men know them; or is it possible that all men should, each for himself, discover them? Yet in their writings they insist on such agreement, and knowledge, and discovery, as the essential conditions of a genuine religion; as may be seen by consulting Herbert, and Blount, and several other authors on the infidel side of the question. But will they venture to say, that these conditions are fulfilled in deism? If not, why should they require from us that abandonment of the system which they allow not in their own case?

But we do not admit the inconsistencies to which the infidel refers. We repeat with confidence, that the writers on the Evidences abound with the most able and complete replies to every single case of the numerous difficulties long since urged and aggravated by infidels of all descriptions. Until argumentative rejoinders be produced, the cases, therefore, must be deemed as perfectly unexceptionable.

The same character, indeed, will apply to every other case. From what has been advanced in the whole course of this Argument, we may infer the perfect fitness and harmony of each and all of the relations involved in the scheme of Scripture. It may be asked by the deist, "How do you know this to be

true, when the great majority of these relations have not been so much as named?" We reply, How do you know that all the stones on the surface of the globe, if thrown into the air, would fall back again to the earth, and each with the very same regular increase of swiftness? Have all these been tried as to this property? Or, is this requisite to prove the question? Certainly not. A sufficient number of instances are known to establish the belief, that the law of gravitation is universal and invariable, however certain appearances may indicate the contrary.

In the broad blue mist of twilight, which sometimes beclouds the distance of a landscape, perhaps an elevated rock or tower seems to disdain the ground, and to hang in the sky, perfectly independent of this lower world. Would this phenomenon, seen for the first time, and unexplained, induce any one but a child to suspect the certainty of the gravitating principle? Would the infidel consider this to be a real exception to the myriads of instances included in his own experience? Would he now feel some hesitation to leap a ditch, lest this law should unhappily suspend its operation, and leave him hanging in the air, without the hope of deliverance? On the contrary, he would, no doubt, conclude this to be a mere appearance, though quite mysterious; especially as he would recollect many similar deceptions in other subjects,—such as the apparent crookedness of an oar, when dipped in the water. For, though an infidel will not, in regard to religion,—that most suspected of all questions,—allow of difficulties, as he does in other studies, yet, as to the case alluded to, he would naturally, in the absence of all prejudice, draw satisfaction, as to practical purposes, from his own proper knowledge, and from a rational comparison of different subjects with each other.

The known instances in Scripture, then, of useful adaptation and of harmony, are, as we have shown, of a character so important, are so numerous and so various, and yet so uniformly preserve the principle of coalescence, that the whole of the unexamined cases have equal claims to credibility. That these cases are part of the same wise and benevolent contrivance, is evident from their close and extensive intermixture with those of which we have just been speaking. To separate the two classes from each other, would be to tear, and render of no value, the seamless garment of the whole.

VIII. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

It may not be improper briefly to resume, at present, some things already but imperfectly considered.

In the course of this inquiry much has been advanced, to show profound and benevolent contrivance as universally characteristic both of the scheme and record of Divine revelation. Much more has been suggested for the exercise of the inquisitive mind, in the farther prosecution of this fruitful and important subject. The common opinions laid down in a former section, or any other just and proper principles on which the reader shall be pleased to fix, may, as there observed, be taken, each in succession, and applied, as far as rationally applicable, to any, or to all, of the parts of the Bible, or any, or all, of the properties or circumstances of each part. In this way,—in all fair and reasonable ways, indeed,—let the witness be tried, even by an enemy, and twisted, and tested, and cross-examined, till inquisition be exhausted; and we verily believe, that not a single inconsistent, or untrue, or prevaricating answer will be given.

Of those opinions, to shorten the labour, let the more essential be selected. For example: Justice, truth, holiness, and goodness, as attributes of God, and as virtues in human society, are always of indispensable consequence, while each presents in itself a principle of beautiful harmony. Justice is harmony, and so of the rest. Let it be asked, "Do these concur and prevail in all that is revealed of God?" mentioning the instances. Put the same question in regard to the fact of furnishing a revelation, or a dispensation of Divine influence in man, or a ministration of the truth by the ordinances of the Gospel. Inquire, "Is the whole or any part of religion calculated to promote those admirable virtues in our personal and relative character?" And so of other cases, till the evidence accumulate, and place the general subject in a blaze of excellence, and on a rock of eternal certainty.

But a variety of methods for closely sifting the question, in the use of these or such like means, might also have been proposed. For instance: The different species of reasoning in common use will, in many respects, apply to the point at issue. Why may we not reason from the effect to the cause, as well in regard to the world of revealed truth, as to that of matter and of mind around us? Is there not a wisdom and a grandeur

in the outline of revelation, indicating, equally with the solar system, a Divine Mind as its only sufficient cause? And might not this train of thought be pursued through innumerable instances of manifest design connected with the Scriptures, as Dr. Paley has done in reference to nature?

This truth is also obvious, if we reason, on the same subject, from the cause to the effect; that is, from our reasonable notions of God and his perfections, to the scheme of revelation, as a regular and consistent result.

We say "reasonable notions," not natural. For, what would be our natural notions, in this case, apart from the influence and suggestions of revelation and tradition, it would be difficult to say. But, though from these sources we derive, sometimes insensibly, those very principles on which we reason to the being and attributes of God, yet the reasoning is legitimate; for, the question is not, whence these principles were received, but whether they be just and solid. Had revelation never appeared, and tradition never shed her light, it would, perhaps, have been a most difficult undertaking, if not impossible, to demonstrate, by any kind of proof, the existence and perfections of a First and Infinite Cause. But now that the subject is suggested, no demonstration is more easy.

It is, therefore, only among those who have either directly or indirectly received the assistance of revealed truth, that any rational and consistent process of this reasoning may be found. As to those who have not been thus enlightened, nothing can be more unsatisfactory, or, sometimes, more absurd, than their notions of the existence, but especially concerning the perfections, of God. And some of the most powerful minds have denied his being altogether.

The truth is, if we must never be indebted to effects, which we intend to prove from their causes, there could be no such thing as an argument *a priori* in regard to the Creator; for, the man who attempts it is himself an effect of the power of that Almighty Being, whose existence he is about to prove; and to prove, not from any effect whatever; for he supposes none to exist, not even his own reasoning powers, but from widely-different premises.

The writers on the Evidences are constantly, and very properly, asserting, that it is at least highly probable, and reasonably to be expected, that God should make himself known by some

revelation. Very true. But this would never have appeared to the profoundest of mankind, unless revelation itself had been previously promulged. Still it is extremely fair to adopt this probability as a prineiple, and as far as possible to reason from it to its consequences; and, slight as it may seem in regard to argument, it will be found on trial to be surprisingly productive of striking presumptions in support of the conclusion. From the attributes of God, from the state of the world, and from the nature of the alleged revelation itself, nothing can be more likely, in regard to such a system, than the justness of its claims to truth, and a Divine authority.

Now, both these kinds of reasoning, so far as applicable to this subject, will, from their own peculiar method, bring to view the properties and bearings, and, of course, the fitness and harmony, of the scheme. It is by this plan of exhibiting the mutual relation of cause and effect, that they proceed to the consequence. It is otherwise with direct proof, which heeds not the internal structure of the system, but proves the facts on which it rests by testimony, supported by undeniable credentials. Whatever tends to unfold the real characters of the subject must reveal, to the same extent, its symmetry and usefulness; or the contrary, supposing its pretensions to be false.

It is well known, also, that in examining the structure of a complex subject, two principal methods of investigation are commonly employed. One of these resolves the whole into its parts; and, viewing them successively, and by a variety of comparisons and inductions, ascertains their nature, and qualities, and effects. And what reason can be given why this may not be done in regard to the plan of redemption; at least as far as it is seen by the evidence of its own light, or of any other light in which it may be placed? This we have in part attempted; but might not the whole series of its leading means and ends be submitted to the same instructive kind of trial? In this method, whatever is affirmed of the subject is taken as the starting-point, from which the mind is led regularly backward to the truth or falsehood of the subject itself. And what a field for such examination is presented, in the nature and properties, in the means and effects, of the Christian system!

In the second method, the commencement, on the contrary, is made from the first principles of the subject; and the subsequent reasoning, if correct, presents a conclusion in perfect

correspondence with them. And the justness of the proof appears by combining the parts together as a sort of sensible intermedium between the principles and the conclusion.

A valuable instance of the application of this method to revelation at large, as contained in both Testaments, may be found in the sermons preached at Boyle's Lecture by Dr. Thomas Burnet.

This learned and powerful writer first proves the being and perfections of God, in the usual way of reasoning from the cause to the effect. Having established just views of these perfections, he proceeds to construct on this foundation a proper and consistent plan of the works and providence of God. He then draws out a scheme of moral obligations, as far as suggested by the nature and circumstances of mankind. This he explains at large with special reference to the important distinction of man, considered as pure or corrupt. The conduct of God towards the world, viewed in these respective characters, is then deduced from rational considerations of the actual state of things.

Revelation is then examined; first, as to the Old Testament, which is found to contain many histories in exact correspondence with the principles which had thus been previously unfolded and confirmed. The numerous dispensations and facts there recorded, both of mercy and of wrath, are shown to be such as might have been expected from the nature and just demands of the several occasions. And the credibility of each history, in this respect, is clearly pointed out.

A similar plan is adopted, to show the requisite and beautiful linkings, by which the New Testament is combined with the Old, as an appropriate and necessary part; as, in truth, the grand consummation of one mighty scheme.

These several plans of proof, which, the intelligent reader will no doubt perceive, are susceptible of a much more accurate explanation, will often be substantially the same; going over the same grounds, and marked by the same general characters and bearings. But this need be no objection, since they mutually confirm the same grand truth, by issuing in the same conclusion; like the different modes of proof applied to the same arithmetical calculation, and establishing beyond dispute the correctness of the process. This circumstance is, of itself, one of those numerous harmonies which are ever starting into view on the scene of this inquiry, and uniting their

unconstrained suffrages in favour of the Bible. And should we claim for all those various kinds of reasonings as applied to the present question, not demonstration, but simply the character of probable, yet who will positively affirm, that the unanimous drift of the whole is not possessed of any considerable weight?

But they are all, we repeat, as well as every other means which can shed one additional ray of light upon the subject, rendered necessary by the difficulty and importance of making any favourable impression on the infidel. In this, no doubt, he thinks he sees his own superior strength of mind, and the weakness of those whose faith can be so fixed and so anxious. But scepticism, as such, is no evidence of manliness. It ought to have its bounds, as well as belief. Beyond a certain limit it is somewhat symptomatic of a morbid understanding, which rejects its proper food, and must be treated with extraordinary delicacy, to induce it to accept of truth in any shape. He is a child, and no hero, or philosopher, who can hardly be prevailed upon, in any circumstances, or by any kind of arguments, to step into a boat for the space of two or three minutes, lest by some unlikely accident it should sink, or be capsized. A wise man often finds that he has doubted more from ignorance, than from a deep and thorough knowledge of the suspected proposition.

But as the numerous works on the Evidences are all highly proper, because of the inconceivable importance of the question; so, for the same powerful reason, the infidel may well be urged to follow up the controversy through every kind of argument, and through the great majority, at least, of those incomparable writings. A first view of the subject, before the proofs appear, demands, with all the authority of reason, and fairness, and interest, that the investigation be extensive, and most patiently conducted. All other topics of dispute, whether of public policy, or of individual concernment, vanish, and are lost from the vision of the thinking mind, in comparison of this great question.

On the one side, all is palpable and terrifying darkness; on the other, let the infidel but once admit the affirmative, and all will instantly be changed as by the wand of the enchanter. It will be as if the sun at midnight should start into the upper sky, and give reality, and meaning, and beauty to the scene, which lately seemed to be possessed of neither. On one side, all is low, and childish, and paltry, and no reason can be assigned for

the existence of any thing; on the other, all nature is stamped with incalculable greatness and value, and a satisfactory reason can be given for every thing. On one side, all is doubt, or dread, or recklessness, or apathy; on the other, all is certainty, and security, and life, and joy.

For things must not be estimated merely from some momentary flush and stir of prosperity; else the rose would be preferred to gold and rubies. An infidel, to be consistent, ought to envy the culprit who is on his way to execution, richly dressed, refreshed with wine, possessed of property, and treated with the kind attention of his friends and the officers of justice, provided he himself can lay no claim to similar advantages.

But the wretch must suffer death in a very few minutes. Yet, if there be no truth in revelation, where lies the mighty difference between his state, and that of the wealthy and ennobled sinner, who in the mean time roams at large? It lies almost entirely in a brief extension of the minutes. His coach must roll along some few short journeys more; he must taste a few more sweets, and receive a few more smiles from all around him; and then he must die, not, it is true, with the odium of the other, but perhaps by lengthened agonies, of which a public execution can know nothing. And who would mind opinion? The poet says, "What is honour,"—and we may add, "What is disgrace," —"to him that died on Wednesday last?"—And, according to infidelity, this is the precise condition, not only of the rich, but of the whole human race.

Who sees not, then, the infinite importance of providing, and accepting, every possible assistance, to resolve the anxious doubt which hangs upon this question? Should the sceptic say, he feels no anxious doubt, we reply, So much the worse. How awfully was this exemplified in the witty death of Hume! But was such a mode of dying at all consistent with his principles? What! to leave his friends, for whom he expressed such respect and love, without the hope of ever seeing them again, and without a sigh or a tear!

How many thousands, at Gravesend, and elsewhere, before embarking for India, have been parted from their friends! Has this been usually on such occasions a scene of merriment and jesting? Yet such separations are not like that of this philosopher,—eternally hopeless. How unnatural, how cruel, how indecent, to take scarce one longing, one affectionate look, at

the only heaven with which his principles had furnished him, —the heaven of a select and attached number of literary gentlemen!

It will probably be said, that Christians themselves are just as insensible to all the sublimity and importance of their admitted faith, as those who reject it. This, in many instances, is lamentably true. But what does it prove? It proves the darkening and infatuating sorcery of sin; and, consequently, the truth of that great scriptural doctrine, the doctrine of original depravity, on which all the other doctrines of the Gospel are founded; as well as the indispensable necessity of a Divine faith, in addition to the common intellectual apprehension of the genuineness of revelation.

And thus, at every turn of the debate, some fresh evidence starts out to view in farther confirmation of the point at issue. Nature, through all her aspects of moral good and evil, of beauty and deformity, of pleasure and pain, proclaims the truth of revelation. The Christian moves continually amidst ten thousand concurring proofs that his faith is not vain.

But if all around him is strikingly associated with the certainty and glory of the Christian dispensation, what shall be said of that other world of mind within him, for which the scheme was chiefly formed? The fitness and harmony of the one, as intended to combine with the other, must be felt in proportion as he fathoms the mystery of his own being. What Hume has justly said of the sciences, applies with much greater force to the sublimer truths of Scripture,—that "they all have a relation to human nature; and, however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back, by one passage or another. This is the centre and capital of the whole, which being once masters of, we may easily extend our conquests every where."

In closing this inquiry, we would again respectfully and earnestly entreat the sceptic, to weigh the whole of what has been advanced, with equal seriousness and fairness. Let him calmly contemplate the nature, and number, and variety, and consistency, of the proofs and reflections here adduced; and judge whether revelation be a "cunningly-devised fable, or a sure word of prophecy, to which he would do well to take heed."

Let him place before his observation the importance of the fitness in question, whether the writings themselves be true

or false, and the cases examined to establish its reality; the multitude of harmonies both in the scheme and composition of those writings; the evidence of experience, of intuition, and of rational deduction, as applied to determine the instances; the pitiful state of nature in the absence of revelation, and the horrors involved in the contrary of all that is there revealed; the knowledge of the subject elicited by the common opinions; the abundant and unquestionable testimony of those who have tried both scepticism and Christianity; the confirmation of history, as a record of the effects of the faith; the value of a written document above what we have called "the pantomime of nature;" the importance of the light reflected between Scripture and the existing state of things; the impossibility of conceiving higher degrees of excellence and of happiness than what the Bible presents to the mind; the power of the fear of God, and the still more lofty, and diffusive, and practical character of love to God, as principles in the moral system, and peculiar to the Scriptures;—difficulties solved as easily as those connected with creation and providence;—the harmony subsisting among the various kinds of evidence usually offered in favour of the Christian cause, and the palpable incoherence of infidel opposition; the futility of the objections brought against the sort of reasoning we have employed; the absurdity of supposing, that if Christianity be false, it should obtain that peculiar character and extent of reception which its unquestioned history so amply records; and the obvious fitness of the whole of the extensive and complex plan for the purposes designed, as clearly illustrated in the reference we have made to a vessel in a state of correct and beautiful equipment:—These considerations form the outline of the Argument, from which he is now required to draw a fair and serious conclusion.

Now, is all this mere absurdity and imposition? Is the whole destitute of truth and force? Could all this be said of Mahometanism, or Budhuism, or any other train of falsehoods, equally extensive with the details of revelation? Does deism present the same signs of excellence, and power, and consistency? Would any of its friends be willing to submit its pretensions to all these various tests? But Christianity has endured the crucible ten thousand times; and, doubtless, if required, it would entirely sustain the same decisive trial twice ten thousand times again.

We have now given the germ, at least, of this kind of argumentation. It would involve an inquiry of no small length and depth to frame a complete analysis; to collect the scattered hints in different writers which have some bearing on this object; to resolve the subjects into classes; to ascertain the harmony contained in each, as a separate system of itself, and to show its coherence with all the other classes; to combine the whole with nature, and to show, that both form together one regular and grand scheme; to elucidate anomalies, to reconcile conflicting appearances, and to answer all objections.

The *Horæ Paulinæ* of Dr. Paley is a branch of the same sort of reasoning; and had he conceived and executed the design of harmonizing things, as well as words, and of extending his inquiries to the Scriptures in general, his comprehensive and penetrating mind would probably have produced one of the most convincing and invulnerable arguments for the truth of the Bible, that ever appeared from the pen of an uninspired advocate. In the hands of an individual, qualified by judgment and research, and possessed of courage and leisure for the work, a species of evidence might thus be exhibited, which, we are strongly inclined to believe, would be in itself the most illustrious, and in its effects the most important, of any that have yet adorned the defensive literature of the Christian church.

AN ATTEMPT

TO TRACE

DIVINE PROVIDENCE,

IN THE LATE

EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS

WHICH HAVE LED TO

THE PEACE OF EUROPE;

IN

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

CHERRY-STREET CHAPEL, BIRMINGHAM,

SUNDAY, JUNE 5TH, 1814.

"THE Lord God omnipotent reigneth."
REVELATION.

"JUSTICE and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: Mercy and truth shall go before thy face."
PSALMS.

"FOR some superior, over-ruling cause
Subjects all mortal things to its appointed laws."
CREECH'S *Manilius*, B. 4.

ADVERTISEMENT.

On Friday, June 3rd, the intelligence of the ratification of peace was received in Birmingham, by an assembly of fifty thousand people, with the liveliest demonstrations of joy.

An occasion so highly interesting, it was judged, might be religiously improved with great advantage to such as would submit to consider it in the light of reason and the word of God. With this view the substance of the following Discourse was delivered the first succeeding opportunity of assembling for Divine worship.

The author presents it to the public with some diffidence. It is the first he ever wrote. The subject is particular, and excludes the discussion of the more important topics which commonly appear in sermons. In the eyes of several persons this will be an objection. It will, no doubt, be improperly supposed by some that this is a true specimen of his usual manner of preaching. And he is sensible, that the pressing request of numbers who heard it delivered will be no sufficient excuse for its publication, should it be found unworthy of the attention of the public.

He does not profess to treat his readers with much original matter; and they will soon perceive that the niceties of style and embellishment have been, perhaps, too much neglected. Some, no doubt, will disapprove of several things he has advanced; but he is open to conviction, and will thankfully receive the corrections of a friend. He is, on the whole, happily conscious that this effort is a sincere attempt to recall their attention to a very important subject—the providence of God, of "God over all, blessed for evermore."

As it was first spoken extempore, it will be readily presumed, that in drawing it up some time after, the language would be, in many instances, materially different. The Discourse is, however, substantially the same. May God Almighty give it his blessing!

Birmingham,
July 19*th*, 1814.

SERMON I.

Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the Heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.—PSALM xlvi. 8—11.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: For all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.—REV. xv. 3, 4.

THESE words plainly teach us to adore the hand of God in great national events. We ought equally to admit his government, as extending to every possible circumstance in the whole universe; for, extraordinary effects are intimately connected with the common course of things. A general superintendence implies that of particulars; and present operations may, through the medium of succeeding ones, essentially affect such as are most remote.

The points of this sublime subject which usually call for proof and reflection relate to the nature, extent, and use of that Divine Providence which is confessed by all to form an express and frequent topic of the Holy Scriptures. If we admit that both passages now read contain general principles, which may apply to any given revolution of a public nature, they will, when taken together, place the subject before us in a very convenient form, by a distinct mention and collective view of its more important branches. The late extraordinary change in the affairs of Europe, including more especially those events immediately connected with the overthrow of Napoleon, who had

long kept France in bondage, and been the scourge of neighbouring nations, is the subject which we intend to illustrate and improve, by a continued reference to the obvious sentiments of these two texts of Scripture. This, however, will oblige us to omit that regular exposition of the words which might involve a practical inquiry of some length into certain Christian doctrines of essential importance, and which may also clearly be deduced from the passages.

The first text contains a sacred triumph, on occasion of certain victories confessed to have been achieved by God, in behalf of the royal Psalmist; probably the conquests over the Philistines and Moabites, mentioned, 2 Samuel viii. 1. The last joyfully anticipates the accomplishment of God's judgments, in the destruction of the beast and his worshippers, and the consequent spread of the Gospel among all nations. Thus, the former passage furnishes, in the Divine love and faithfulness, a pledge of the fulfilment of what is predicted in the latter; and both are calculated to confirm our confidence in God, and to animate the hopes of his people, with regard to the result of things in every possible instance.

The limits of a single address will not admit of a minute and full discussion of the general theme of a Providence,—a subject eminently copious and interesting, and capable of the most subtle and profound argumentation. But even partial views, if accurate, will be found of importance, when we consider, that the subject is one of those which are encumbered with a variety of the most dangerous errors and mistakes. While some deny a superintending Providence altogether, others, in the contrary extreme of superstition, are beholding it in the most extravagant light, and magnifying its operations in ordinary and trivial matters into miracles perfectly analogous to that which our Lord performed when he raised Lazarus from the dead. Some believe it to be all impenetrable mystery; and others have presumptuously attempted to sound its very deeps, losing themselves and their readers in its immensity. Some make it a pretence for effecting their own purposes; and confidently, by way of assisting God, follow up the most ridiculous and wicked undertakings. And not a few make it a false criterion of persons and things, liberally extolling or depreciating, by this rule only, the characters of individuals; and deeming the success or defeat of an enterprise a sufficient proof of its propriety or folly. Some,

with a weakness highly dishonourable to the Christian faith, sink beneath its judgments into utter despondency; and some, though they receive its gifts with uplifted eyes of acknowledgment, yet prostitute them to purposes of rebellion against God.

From these remarks we may presume, that a right apprehension of some distinct and important revolution in the affairs of men will enable us to judge with greater accuracy and advantage of the general subject of a Providence. Let us, then, proceed to contemplate the late political events which we have already proposed as the theme of this discourse.

I. Remark the surprising nature and incalculable importance of the events themselves.

Astonishment still pervades the public mind, and will, perhaps, prevent for some time longer a due inquiry into their meaning, and the proper application of them to the purposes of life and virtue. No wonder we should now exclaim, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!" Our amazement at the magnitude of things is often in proportion to our ignorance of their causes, of the modes of their existence, and of the ends to be answered by them. If such, then, was the language of those who are permitted to survey Divine Providence behind the scene, what must be the surprise and admiration of mortals at the appearance of such great events as those now under consideration, and which we chiefly behold in the shape of pure facts? But when wonder subsides, we attempt to fathom reasons.

We have, indeed, seen strange things of late: A man raised by rapid steps from an ordinary sphere of life to an unexampled height of station and power, and possessed of the capacity and disposition to apply that authority to the great detriment of mankind: Immense armies repeatedly collected by the potency of his measures, not on the frontiers of his own dominions for defence, but directed to invade and enthral other nations of far more extensive population and riches, and possessed of equal talents and improvement in the arts of civilization: Dreadfully successful during a space of years over some of the firmest and most ancient of the European governments, and still threatening by his movements to subdue and desolate the rest.

But, at length, the hook is put into his jaws, and he is turned back by the way he came. And now behold a downfall much

more rapid and extraordinary than his rise! He is checked by unexpected difficulties, in an injured region of the north,—difficulties from the avenging elements, and from the dreadful, but unavoidable, policy which set fire to a large and opulent city. The powers of Europe, that had been successively forced to co-operate with him, unite, at once, not only to shake off his yoke, but to crush his tyranny and power. The tide of his affairs is now effectually turned: He has little more to experience but disasters, revolt, and a surprising inadequacy of his own mind and personal conduct, which used to bring relief in the greatest emergencies. The issue is astonishing: A grand defeat of all his measures and abilities; a most disgraceful abdication of a throne he dearly loved; the contempt and execration of a whole world poured without mixture on his guilty person. Bad political principles are exposed by their overthrow; genuine policy is triumphant; peace, breaking through the clouds, at last fructifies the earth with plenty; a wide door is opened for the spread of the everlasting Gospel; "Europe reposes free; and commerce and the arts revive."

These are scenes of high interest, as contemplated by the man of imagination, the philosopher, the statesman, and the Christian. When rightly felt, they must produce, by means of that feeling, not only an enlargement of mental capacity, but of certain distinct valuable qualities and virtues of the heart. It is true, the whole is accompanied with circumstances which, in a general view, are horrid. "Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood." Let us, however, reflect, that a great evil had been permitted, unquestionably in the wisdom of Providence, to arise in the tyranny of an individual; and that this monster could only be destroyed, without a direct miracle, by means similar to that by which it had attained to power. Therefore, though war is in itself an awful scourge, yet, as wielded by the allied armies, it is excellent in its drift and consequences—it is noble; and while justice continues to be looked upon as good and amiable by the righteous mind, her instruments and sanctions must also be viewed through that relation, though, in one respect, with horror, yet with some degree of pleasing veneration; nay, mercy to myriads of men now living, and to myriads yet unborn, must approve of the only alternative by which the tyrant could have been deposed.

But at length a treaty has been finished which says, "It is enough." Numerous domestic circles shall again be made complete. No longer shall thousands of accountable souls be hurried in their guilt into the presence of their Judge; but men shall be allowed the appointed times and means of probation for eternity. The general affairs of the world shall now commence a happier progress; and things, both visible and invisible, in their necessary connexions with each other and mutual influences, be greatly improved in the effects of this long-desired and ever-memorable peace.

This is all delightful. No unpleasant feeling can mix itself with these enchanting considerations. All is great in value, and most marvellous in the modes of its growth and consummation, as well as being freely bestowed by a merciful God on rebellious mortals. Here are works of might, of wisdom, of pity, and of love, altogether inimitable by man; which could not have been preconcerted in any human mind, and which indicate an inconceivable greatness in the Being under whose direction the whole has proceeded.

Peace alone deserves to be ranked among the noblest and most valuable of Heaven's gifts. Nothing is more frequently or pathetically recommended to us by God himself. How often does he assume, for our instruction and comfort, the title of "the God of Peace!" One of his most ancient promises made to his people here on earth was, that they should enjoy peace and liberty in their day, and that they should be gathered to their fathers in peace. Though David was a king "after God's own heart," and fought the battles of the Lord, yet he was not permitted to build the temple, because his reign had been polluted with blood and war; but the glory of that work was reserved for Solomon, a prince of peace. Peace best agrees and corresponds with the Majesty of Heaven, is most grateful to the Divine will, and approaches nearest to the nature of genuine religion. Peace is the image of the Divine approbation; it is the height of our felicity,—the delight and ornament of life. What is there in the world that is desirable or good, that is not either attained or improved in time of peace? If we love advantages of mind, what virtue, what learning, what tranquillity, may be found in days of peace! And with regard to the body, peace is the source of innumerable medicines and comforts obtained from every clime and region of the globe.

Above all, peace is the period of convenient means and leisure for preparing finally to enter the land of eternal rest and peace, and for extending, as already hinted, the knowledge of salvation, through a Redeemer, to all nations.

As Britons, we have at present peculiar reason to admire and to express our increasing, our unceasing, wonder and delight. We have long enjoyed innumerable blessings, richly varied, suitable, invaluable, unequalled. These have been in imminent danger. The means, therefore, by which they have been preserved, must be great as to consequences. What says David in the previous context? "There is a river," the Kidron, "the streams whereof shall," notwithstanding the threatened vengeance of opposing armies, "make glad the city of God,"—continue to pass uninjured by Jerusalem, and refresh, with its springs and rivulets, the inhabitants and gardens of that divinely-favoured city,—"the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High." Who will hesitate to apply these words at the present time to the capital of the British empire? "There is a river," the majestic Thames, "the streams whereof," chiefly by their commercial importance, as also by the health-inspiring air, and romantic beauty of its banks, "shall make glad the city of God," shall continue, in spite of the envy and machinations of the oppressor, to enrich and adorn that most highly-favoured of all the cities upon earth, that "holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High," where the true religion, as well as every other branch of universal wisdom, has its principal seat. "God is in the midst of her: She shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The Heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

II. The events in question appear to be the result of a Divine interposition.

An interposition implies an interference with the ordinary course of things; or, rather, it is a peculiar influence from Him who "worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will." It is the production of effects by means of special energies, which effects could not be produced purely by what are called natural or common operations. That God can qualify the current of events either immediately from himself, or through the medium of connecting circumstances, reason fully admits; and that he has done so in numerous instances, the Scripture

demonstrates. And when we consider the depravity of human nature in connexion with the extent of its effective powers, we shall perceive the absolute necessity of such a check upon the world, not only for its well-being, but for the preservation of its very existence. This peculiar force and government respects both the visible creation and the human mind. For, though man is a moral agent, yet this one thing is clear, that in many cases he may be swayed at the will of his Creator, without suffering any improper infringement of his moral freedom. Accordingly, we find the Scriptures of the Old Testament almost constantly referring events to God himself; all the good that is done being viewed as regularly flowing from him, and works of sin and their consequences not only being permitted, but so managed and over-ruled by him, as instrumentally to promote his own glory and the good of mankind.

Interpositions in favour either of nations or individuals appear to be partly designed to awaken the attention of a careless world to the existence, the sovereignty, the perfections, and counsels of God; and, perhaps, they have occurred less frequently in these latter ages of the world than formerly, in proportion to our superior means of acquaintance with the will of God, as revealed in the complete and perfectly-intelligible canon of the Holy Scriptures. They are, however, still necessary, as excellent occasional means of moral and religious consequences: For man, with all the convincing and rousing texts which press upon him, is yet unwilling to remark the workings of God's providence, and to walk in the fear and love of his name.

As to the events under consideration, some will demand the proof of the hand of God in over-ruling them. The candid, the enlightened, the ingenuous, and pious mind will feelingly apprehend the truth of this doctrine, without much formal reasoning. One sort of evidence, however, may be mentioned, in addition to that of the doctrine of Scripture. It is drawn from such circumstances in the events themselves as denote design and contrivance for the accomplishment of some specific end. The sagacious Dr. Paley has well applied this mode of reasoning to the natural world, and proved the existence and all-pervading energy of an infinite Being, from the marks of intelligence above-mentioned, which are every where observable. If I am not greatly mistaken, a similar kind of argumentation will apply to Providence; and at the same time we shall be fur-

nished with a rule by which we may ascertain a Divine interference, where it exists, on any train of events whatever, both with regard to nations and individuals. Thus, when in any scheme of human actions, however complicated and extensive, we perceive the concurrence and succession of such circumstances as directly contribute to a certain end, without the consenting will and operation of man in such means with a view to that end; in other words, when circumstances take place which may be termed "accidental," and on which the end in question essentially depends; and more especially when that end is one of great moment and importance to the cause of God and the happiness of men, and is accomplished apparently in a time of the greatest necessity, when the hopes and efforts of those who are interested are almost ready to expire; when, I say, such a position of things presents itself, we may rest satisfied that the hand of God is more especially to be observed. All this may be done without a direct miracle, though there is a good sense in which it is miraculous, inasmuch as there is something distributed through the whole affair above what is merely natural. It is the combination of circumstances, and a suitable and appropriate one, too, that effects the purpose of the Great Agent.

Accordingly, we find that, in Scripture, events, in some degree similar to those which have lately excited our astonishment, are considered as the work of God. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like unto them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: Then said they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Now, if we separately examine all the means which concurred to the surprisal of Babylon by Cyrus, and which ultimately led to the emancipation of the Jewish people, perhaps, we shall not find one direct miracle among them all. Yet, if we consider all the combinations and successions of second causes in that transaction, as related by profane authors, we shall be forced to own that the exact correspondence of those ordinary events to the accomplishment of that deliverance was evidently the work of God; and, as such, not only the Jews themselves, but the very Heathen, acknowledged it.

In like manner a great deliverance has been lately wrought out for Europe. We may well be "like unto them that dream."

We can still scarce give credit to the truth of what has passed. It rises on our imagination more like romance than genuine history. But God was in the business, and produced an issue unexpected and inconceivable by those very sovereigns, statesmen, and veterans, whom he employed as his instruments. Of course their operations were not conducted with a view to such an issue. Nay, it flowed from circumstances over which they had no control; circumstances which some would say occurred by chance; but which had their proper causes, and showed that they were regulated by a Supreme Designing Intelligence. Such were the war of elements which the tyrant had to oppose in Russia, the infatuated obstinacy with which he repeatedly refused respectable terms of peace, by which he might have held his empire, his frequent want of generalship, and his loss by the accident of the bridge at Leipsig. A wise man may err more than once, even in affairs to which his powers are commensurate, and which call forth the deepest interest of his heart: But a regular succession of mistakes which is directly productive of ruin to the individual, seems to argue something more than common frailty: It seems to imply judicial blindness. Such lapses of understanding as those alluded to above, in a mind of great capacity, of promptitude, and of habits of experience, like that of the late ruler of France, may well be considered as occasioned by the sovereign hand of God, which, when withdrawn from the mind, leaves it weak and undirected; or, when it touches with peculiar force, may lead to results very different to what would otherwise occur.

Thus it is "the Lord that reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." This, however, ought not to prevent the honour and gratitude which are at present daily conferred by the nations of Europe on the mighty instruments of counsel and war, through whose "perseverance, valour, union, and magnanimity," a general peace has been effected. As God works by means, their direct efforts also are essential to the scheme. And when these efforts are conducted in righteousness, by wisdom and constancy, the meed of honour and emolument cannot be justly withheld.

Among the various means in question, may be reckoned the diffusion of enlightened principles of government and policy in a long, but successful, opposition to those of tyranny and despotism, the steady energies of unrivalled commanders, and the

ardent and multiplied prayers of thousands of God's people; prayers more powerful, if the Divine blessing is at all important, than the united artillery of the allied armies.

III. The events we are now considering may be viewed as a political preparation for the accomplishment of far more important changes in the religious world, and also as a pattern of the manner of that accomplishment.

That several great events of this nature, as predicted in the Scriptures, yet remain to be fulfilled, is the almost unanimous opinion of the church of God; such as the destruction of the beast, or man of sin, mentioned both by St. John and St. Paul, supposed to refer to the pope and his corrupt hierarchy, the conversion of the Jews, and a much greater fulness of Christian converts in the Gentile world. Admitting the propriety of expecting such events, it must be confessed that the figurative expressions of the prophecies concerning them have been too closely adhered to. It has been confidently asserted that the Jews shall, in the most literal sense, return to their own land. And a general conversion of the Gentiles to Christ has been magnified into an universal one. It has also been apprehended that the manner of accomplishing such changes will be in some instances directly miraculous; as if signs and wonders in the air should precede them; as if they were to be effected by fire from heaven destroying the wicked; by the power of God instantaneously transporting the Gospel to all nations; and by a Divine force on the souls of men to convert them, without regard being had to their freedom as moral agents.

But this is evidently forming a judgment from the apparent meaning of certain texts, without a right consideration of the structure of language and of the nature of things. We have lately had abundant proof in the political world, and may perceive by other instances in history, that there is no necessity for effecting even the most extraordinary changes in nations by means purely miraculous. Formerly, when miracles were performed, it was for their own sake, as evidences of the existence and perfections of God; and though the instances in which they occurred necessarily excluded every other method of accomplishment besides that of the suspension of the laws of nature, yet it should be remembered that the choice of such instances was made with the express view of affording an occasion for miracles.

How completely, how rapidly, has God, by the hidden operations of his wisdom and power, effected certain memorable changes in these latter ages of the world! Instance the restoration of learning chiefly through the medium of printing; an art which, though possessed by the ancient Romans, as appears from certain instruments in the British Museum, by which they stamped their wine casks with the names of different wines, was never thought of as applicable to books till many ages after, when God, at the proper time, directed the human mind to this most excellent invention. Also, the Reformation was a complete subordinate scheme of Providence; and, though an event of the highest magnitude and importance, it was effected without a miracle. It seems, however, to have flowed from that designing and peculiar providence of God to which we have already adverted; who evidently raised up Luther for that purpose, and furnished him with certain circumstantial helps which could only have been furnished by his own age and country. British commerce, a matter of such capital importance to the nation, has been raised to its height by means of a singular circumstance,—the patronage and impulse it received from the English nobility at the time of the civil wars, when the parliament removing the greater part of them from all civil and military employments, they applied to merchandize, and, by amassing great wealth, rooted out the ancient prejudices against trade, and greatly encouraged it in other ranks of society. The Revolution in William and Mary, which gave perfect form and stability to the liberties of this country, was speedily accomplished, and by means at once natural in their operations, and Divine with regard to their conjuncture and result. Who can help being surprised at the revival of true religion and the progress of the Gospel in Great Britain and Ireland during the last century? No one sees a miracle in the case, unless it be the opinion of some, that the extraordinary effusions of the Spirit of God upon the people ought to be reckoned as such. Yet the peculiar fitness of the grand instruments themselves, and of the times and situations in which they exercised their functions, together with the mutual influence, continuance, and astonishing success of their efforts, seems to show that God had purposed such effects, and had accordingly directed this course of things as the means.

Now, a revolution yet remains to be effected, which of all

others is presumed to be the most glorious and important, and to which all others have appeared in the economy of Providence to bear some direct reference. This event is no less than the extension of the Gospel to all nations, and its great success, in becoming actually the wisdom and the power of God to the salvation of mankind in general. This wonderful change, with the grand scheme of things which it more immediately embraces, is believed to be largely prophesied in the Revelation of St. John. The event is, no doubt, worthy of prophecy. That book is as well authenticated as any other in the whole Scriptures. Sir Isaac Newton says, ("Observ. on Apoc." p. 249,) "I do not find any other book of the New Testament so strongly attested, or commented upon so early as this." "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy; for the time is at hand." And though we have frequently to encounter impenetrable mystery, yet, surely, enough may be known to answer every purpose of faith and practice, as also of consolation, to the church in its wilderness-state. The opinion of those who assert that the whole was fulfilled in the days of the primitive Christians, is not only difficult in its application to historical facts, but is obviously disproportioned to the sublime significations and manner of the whole book, as well as to the grand succession of ages in the Christian dispensation, which we may easily suppose was not undeserving of such prophetic notices. As, then, the prophecy has now been fulfilling nearly two thousand years, no small part must have been already fulfilled; and by a rational, a diligent, and serious attention to what is past, no doubt, some very probable and useful conjectures may be formed with regard to what remains.

Perhaps one of the most sagacious and devout examiners of this subject which has appeared, was John Albert Bengel, a learned German, who, in the beginning of the last century, published an Exposition on the Revelation, which, for the clear, steady, and important light which it cast upon the prophecy, seemed to surpass every thing of the kind that had preceded it. I will here present you with a brief table from his Introduction, as translated from the High Dutch, by John Robertson, M.D. and published in 1757. This table is regulated by profound calculations, contained in the Introduction, but which it would be improper to enter into on this occasion. It may serve as

an illustration of that view of events which is now under consideration.

"A.D. 1058, Sept. 2, Wed. The two wings of the great eagle given to the woman;" that is, the successful propagation of the Gospel throughout both the east and west of the Roman empire. The beginning of the three times and a half, Rev. xii. 14.

"1077, Sept. 1, Frid. The rising of the beast out of the sea, in the person of Gregory VII." who assumed greater power than his predecessors, and gave to the Romish Papacy a peculiar shape and authority.

"1143, Sept. 25, Sat. The beginning of the forty-two months of the power of the beast, in Celestine II." that is, of the height of his power, Rev. xiii. 18. This period is the same with the number of the beast,—six hundred and sixty-six.

"1810, May 21, Sat.; June 1. N. S. The end of the forty-two months, and of the number of the beast. Soon after, when the vials are poured out, the beast is not, but Babylon reigns as queen." "When the forty-two months of power are out, we must not conclude, that immediately the beast is not; for he was even before these months. But, on pouring out the vial of the fifth angel, his kingdom becomes so darkened that it is weaker now than before the beginning of the forty-two months." If we compare this portion of the table with the period when Napoleon broke the power and authority of the pope, who can help being struck with the near coincidence of times and facts?

"1832, Oct. 14, Mon. The rising of the beast out of the abyss." A grand effort of the beast to resume his power. "After one" prophetical "hour, viz.,

"1832, Oct. 22, Tuesd. The ten kings give their royal power to the beast." "The beast, with the ten kings, shall make the whore desolate. Rome was founded in the three thousand nine hundred and sixty-first year of the Julian period, the twenty-ninth of October," as Des Vignoles proves, towards the end of his Chronology, "on a Thursday. From that time to A.D. 1832, the six thousand five hundred and forty-fifth of the Julian period, the twenty-second of October, Tuesday," which is the day mentioned in our table, "there are, after subtracting the excess of the Julian year, precisely two thousand five hundred and eighty-four years, or one hundred and twenty-six thousand, one hundred and eighty-six weeks and almost five days from that Thursday to this Tuesday. What will befall

Rome seventy-six years hence," from October, 1756, the year Dr. Robertson executed his translation, "on her birth-day, will be worth the observation of those who shall live at that time."

"1836, June 18, Sund. The destruction of the beast, the end of the three times and a half, and the commencement of the thousand" common "years of great and general prosperity to the church and the world."

On this view of events Bengel makes the following remarks: "Our table may be looked upon as uncertain in some particular articles; but the whole of it, as far as it extends, is strongly supported both by historical and exegetical proofs. Those of the six intervals of this period, which are less precisely determined in the Revelation, are determined out of Daniel; as, the existence of the beast before the forty-two months, his non-existence, and the short space of the other kings, and the three times and a half, which Daniel had expressed in the proper terms, are in the Revelation included in the short space. Again: The time which Daniel had expressed enigmatically by one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days, the Apocalypse explains by the proper terms of one thousand years. Surely these things are not accidental! We do not, indeed, assert every part with equal assurance; but we propose them all, that posterity may have notice of what they are to observe, and may partly correct and partly confirm them, according to the event."

Such are the views of the celebrated Bengel, whom Mr. Wesley styles "that great light of the Christian world." Now, admitting a degree of propriety in this general scope of things, or in any other similar and equally important changes yet to be fulfilled, we may fairly presume, that the late great events on the continent are a very essential step towards the full accomplishment. The scheme of Bengel will, however, be allowed to be extremely probable. One immediate effect of such events will be a rapid diffusion of right views of civil and religious liberty, and, consequently, an extensive propagation of the Gospel of Christ in its purity. This will naturally excite the wrath and malignity of the papal hierarchy, and of the sons of wickedness in general. A mighty and corrupt power may again be permitted to arise and spoil the church of God, as a dreadful political tyranny was lately suffered to distress the nations; and a great "fight of afflictions," through violent persecution, may fall thereby upon the faithful. This opposition will prompt a vigorous re-action of Christian zeal and diligence, which, aided

by the blessing and help of God, will issue in a more glorious conquest over ignorance and sin than ever before appeared. Even a visit of kings to this country,—a consequence of the general peace, however gaudy and unmeaning it may appear in the eyes of some pious persons, may yet prove to be an event of great political and religious moment. The royal visitors may acquire a wisdom and zeal in the arts of government which will produce the happiest effects on distant ages and nations. It has been sometimes presumed, with reason, that the emperor of Russia alone, from the peculiarity of his situation in this respect, will be the instrument, in the hand of God, of overturning the tyranny and superstition of the Turks : And other great events will, no doubt, regularly flow from the same important causes. The extraordinary nature of such changes, and of the events mentioned in the latter part of the above table, can form no solid argument against their possibility. The events of the former part have occurred, as we may see, in the regular, though extraordinary, course of things, and under the qualifying direction of the Supreme Ruler. The same held good of what remains to be fulfilled. And the stupendous reverse of things which now excites the joyful amazement of the public, may, perhaps, be justly viewed, not only as a pledge to the world of far more glorious revolutions, concealed beyond the present horizon of affairs, but also as a general pattern of the manner in which He may be pleased to effect them. The energies of the Bible and Missionary Societies of the present day,—energies so various, so numerous, so unanimous, so vigorous, and so absolutely unexampled,—seem to strengthen what we have said on this most interesting subject. They appear to be a highly-important part of the great scheme. And when considered in regard to their own nature, and the times of their institution, as joining hands, with other contemporary events, to enlighten, to renovate, and to save mankind, they concur to demonstrate the designing hand of God, in hastening the coming of his kingdom, and the catastrophe of the world.

IV. The late extraordinary events of Europe are worthy of consideration, as an instructive and impressive specimen of Divine Providence in general ; as a comprehensive sample of the Divine perfections and conduct, with regard to the whole human race.

We will attempt, by degrees, to explain the meaning of this particular. As we have presumed, that God governs the uni-

verse according to the respective natures of the beings which compose it, by means of his own immediate superintendence of the inanimate world, and also through the medium of free agents, whom he accordingly restrains or propels for this purpose, the plan of government must be, in most cases, the same; that is to say, cause and effect will always bear to each other some relation as to kind, and some proportion in regard to degrees; while at the same time God reserves to himself the prerogative, in all cases, of determining the balance by sudden and secret movements, to demonstrate his providence, and to effect his inscrutable designs. The course of individual life is, therefore, as much under his control as that of a nation, or of all nations taken together. In the smallest concern which relates to the meanest of mankind the Supreme Ruler will direct, so as to manifest in that particular instance the peculiar glory of his wisdom, or mercy, or justice, or holiness, or, perhaps, a due mixture of all these at once. It is, however, by the great events of nations that our attention is particularly roused to behold Divine Providence; and in them is the wondrous plan more strikingly delineated. They are copies on a large scale of what we may clearly discern at all times, both in our own private affairs, and in those of others. In all things we have reason to acknowledge, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." In all God's proceedings towards us we may evidently trace his perfections and counsels; either justice in punishment, mercy in correction, power and wisdom in the modes of deliverance, or benevolence and love in the varied bounties of Providence, and in the far more important blessings of his grace.

Therefore, in every scheme of things, or even single circumstance, which includes a portion of the Divine government and superintendence, we may hope to trace some certain evidences of the several perfections and purposes of God. Indeed, this is clearly implied in the nature of government by a Being of perfect intelligence and goodness. There is a motive right or wrong, a power adequate or the contrary, an effect good or bad, in all that is done by the agency of mind. And as nothing in the whole universe can be done without mind, every thing that is done, from the motion of a spire of grass to the rise or fall of an empire, will connect our contemplation of effects with that of the peculiar agencies by which they are produced. The same reason, so to speak, which determined the Almighty to give being to his creatures, must evince the propriety of his continuing to notice

and act with regard to them in such a manner as shall eventually indicate that sort of relation, whether of favour or displeasure, in which they really stand to him, as the Supreme Governor and sole Proprietor of all things.

From these general observations, others more particular, but important, will clearly flow. For instance: We ought to recognise, with great attention and piety, the hand of God in all our personal and ordinary concerns. A sense of his wise and gracious sovereignty would greatly contribute to peace of mind, and propriety of conduct. What astonishing causes, sometimes, will be found to have over-ruled a case of conversion to God,—a marriage, a commencement in business, or a change from one situation of life to another! God is evidently the author of all talents, both of the mind and person, and also of the circumstances, both of time and place, in which they are exercised. It follows, that those accidental changes connected with such circumstances, upon which great results so frequently depend, are also under his direction. To be insensible of all this, is to live amidst a scene of things which, to us, is absolutely mysterious, unmeaning, and discordant. But if we know it as we ought, we are possessed of a key to all the possible varieties of human life.

It also merits observation, that great calamities, whether of societies, or of individuals, are partly designed for the benefit of men in general. This thought is strikingly expressed in the 11th section of Sir Thomas Browne's "Christian Morals." I cannot forbear to cite the whole passage, with some necessary verbal alterations. "Carry no careless eye," he observes, "upon the unexpected scenes of things; but ponder the acts of Providence in the public ends of great and notable men, set out to the view of all for no common memorandums. The tragical exits and unexpected periods of some eminent persons, cannot but amuse considerate observers, who, without self-reflection, conceive themselves unconcerned by the fallacy of their own exemption: Whereas, the mercy of God hath singled out but few to be the signals of his justice, leaving the generality of mankind to the teaching of example. But the indavertency of our natures not well apprehending this favourable method and merciful decimation,* and that he showeth in some what others also deserve, they entertain no sense of his hand beyond the stroke of them-

* The selection of every tenth man for punishment, a practice sometimes used in general mutinies.

selves. Whereupon the whole becomes necessarily punished, and the contracted hand of God extended to universal judgments: From whence, nevertheless, the stupidity of our tempers receives but faint impressions, and in the most tragical state of times holds but starts of good motions. So that to continue us in goodness, there must be iterated returns of misery; and a circulation of afflictions is necessary. And since we cannot be wise by warnings; since plagues are insignificant, except we be personally plagued; since, also, we will not be punished to amendment by proxy or commutation, nor by vicinity, but by contact of evil; there is an unhappy necessity that we must smart in our own skins, and the provoked arm of the Almighty must fall upon ourselves. The capital sufferings of others are rather our monitions than acquittances. There is only One who died to procure our salvation, and is able to say to death, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther;' whose death alone enlivens, makes gardens of graves, and that which was sowed in corruption to arise and flourish in glory."

What has been said seems to warrant the conclusion, which also shines clearly on the face of the text,—a conclusion truly animating, yet solemn, yea, tremendous,—that Providence is founded on the justice, holiness, benevolence, and mercy of God. If any fact appears to contradict this truth, it is because we do not see it in its true nature, and in the whole of its relations. Perhaps it can only be explained by other facts extremely distant both in time and place. As we are not acquainted with the whole of the wide and complicated machinery of things, those parts which do appear cannot be fully understood, because we are entire strangers to innumerable other motions which do not appear, but with which they combine to produce the grand movement. With regard to the decisions and dispensations of God, "whatever is, is right." We need not fear that things proceed without a plan, and that their end will be confusion, destruction, and misery. Even in the consideration of evil, we ought to judge, without demur, that God's management of it is always holy, just, and good. There is a sense in which the late important events are rightly considered as the work of the Lord. Who demands a full elucidation of them, in order to reconcile them to his moral attributes? Let such inquirer think of the obvious purport and effects of the late Divine dispensations. Has one manifest design of them been to show his utter abhor-

rence of all unholiness, and to punish men for the guilt of it? How, then, could his means of effecting such a purpose be any other than immaculate? Did he teach men by his judgments the sacred nature and eternal obligation of justice? How, then, could this teaching itself be any other than most righteous? Was it his principal object to promote the happiness of nations, and of his church in particular? And is it possible to characterize his measures, with the smallest propriety, in any other light than as altogether good, and benevolent, and kind?

The great duty on our part is, feelingly to acknowledge and contemplate that assemblage of Divine perfections and purposes which shines with such awful splendour in his more interesting providences, especially in the great events of kingdoms and states. In the stupendous affairs of Europe which have lately transpired, we behold an actual and most impressive exposition of the Divine attributes and character. Here the Almighty Ruler has gloriously asserted what are adverted to in the text,—his propriety in man, his Godhead, his omnipotence, his sovereignty, his justice, his truth, his purity, his goodness, his forbearance, and long-suffering, and also the terror of his wrath in his judgments on sinners. And was not all this intended to call forth the attention of mankind, and to promote a national piety in all the states of Europe? Let us remember that we are individuals among the myriads of men who are at present called to listen to the awful admonition. Shall we not then admire, and tremble, and adore?

V. The events under consideration obviously teach us certain practical lessons of great importance.

Of these only a few can be noticed on the present occasion. Nor can we possibly be indulged with an extended discussion in any single instance. Indeed, every separate branch of this whole subject ought rather to be fully investigated and personally applied, as far as admissible, in our individual and retired characters, accompanied by much prayer to the Father of Lights, than in the stinted circumstances of a public discourse.

In the first place we conclude, how much all nations ought to abhor the immoral policy, and resist the fatal tyranny, of ambitious and cruel despots or states, who may occasionally arise to endanger the peace and welfare of the world. If, in private society an individual, under any pretence whatever, should seize upon his neighbours, to enslave their persons, and to destroy and

alienate their property, ought not the whole neighbourhood to rise in opposition to him, and deliver him over to confinement and the course of law? And shall nations be unconcerned and passive while a tyrant rears his Gorgon-head, like the beast out of the great abyss, and threatens to devour kingdom after kingdom, with a probable intent to seize upon the whole earth? Is there not a law of nations, of eternal justice, and even of common mercy to mankind, that not only vindicates, but demands, the firmest possible allied opposition to the horrid mischief?

It would appear that the general policy of Britain, and her efforts, in connexion with those of her allies, have accorded with the designs of Providence in the late unhappy struggle. And who does not acknowledge that, under God, she has been the saviour of Europe from anarchy and ruin? Yet some of her mistaken sons, to call them by no severer name, have reproached her, not only for her measures in the prosecution of her object, but for that object itself; and denounced, that the balance of political power which she has laboured to recover, is but a shadow. If this assumption be true, then the loss of such balance is nothing but a shadow;—a dreadful shade, however, that has often blasted the fairest and richest enjoyments of humanity, and engendered more diseases and deaths than ever were produced by pestilence and famine, storms and earthquakes, and all the other curses of mankind put together. Witness the melancholy history of all the mighty monarchies of the world.

Liberty is one of the most precious gifts of Heaven; and wherever it is violated, the way is opened, in some respects, for the wide-spreading of all evil. And it is owing to the watchful providence of God that the rushing deluge has been often stopped, and forced to retire. It is in the co-operation of a wise and virtuous policy and energy with the same Divine Providence, that the blessings of civil and, consequently, religious society are secured to us; and thus we are additionally called to value and protect our liberties, from the consideration of their important bearing on that eternal state to which mankind are hastening. Liberty is the ground and pillar upon which the noblest superstructure of things is erected. By its great power it gives existence to myriads of immortal spirits, and then kindly extends to them the knowledge of a Saviour, and the grace of eternal life. It is through the peculiar advantages which she affords, that thousands are more abundantly prepared for heaven,

and "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever."

Another reflection is, that though the rise and fall of states depend on the will of God, they are the necessary result of the respective means employed to effect them—of those varied combinations which govern, by unalterable laws, the destinies of men. By virtue ancient Rome was raised, and by vice alone she fell. How this accords with the sovereignty of Providence is easy to understand. God by no means ordains and determines the elections of free agents; but all the consequences of each particular choice—all the modes both of pleasure and of pain—flow directly from his will and power. The unbridled passions of Napoleon were formed in no small measure by an abuse of his military education and early successes; and to this his ultimate defeat may be as clearly traced, as the death of a tree to the corruption of its root, or to the stroke of the axe. "His mind was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him."

Then, whatever be the line of Providence in which we are called to act, let us be "co-workers together with God," in suppressing evil and promoting the welfare of mankind, in advancing our own eternal interests and the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom; always remembering that he works by regular means, not from necessity, but for the honour and felicity of the intelligent instruments whom he employs to promote his designs. And with regard to effects, let us in every case beware of giving birth to those causes which we know from the word of God, and the experience of mankind, would be productive of evil. Nor let us be wanting to ourselves because Heaven is so ready to assist us; for God rewards the diligent, and not the slothful; he crowns the men of courage with victory, but abandons a people when they neglect their own preservation.

Our third instruction runs thus: If ever the common but most necessary and important observation, that all sublunary things are vain and uncertain; and that the powerful machinery which governs the world is not within the control of the finite powers of man;—if ever this observation was demonstrated, and strikingly exemplified, it has been in the awful events we have now considered. If ever man seemed to stand immovably secure from danger, in the full possession of what the world calls glory, and deems to be happiness, it was Napoleon

Buonaparte. He seemed, indeed, to have built his nest on high, and to have bid defiance to the utmost stretch of human power. He doubtless might have said, with greater confidence than any one that ever went before him could assume, "I shall sit as a queen and see no sorrow." But let the unparalleled language of the prophet be applied to paint the depth of his fall, by showing the height of his ambition:—

"The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruleth the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: They break forth into singing. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedar of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: It stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that seek thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: The seed of evil-doers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their

fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord."

It affords no proper confidence to sinners that the wicked often flourish to the end of life; that tyrants sometimes prosper to the last, and die in their beds. Where was the certainty, or even probability, of this before it happened? Was not the exact contrary most likely to ensue as the result of their proceedings? And when God has, in a few instances, protected the guilty, for a long space, from merited destruction, it has been in relation to some other purpose or purposes, which determined the balance apparently in favour of the delinquents. But this must only be looked upon in the light of a reprieve, and by no means as an acquittal. Punishment is postponed; but for that very reason, without repentance, it is sure to be proportionally increased.

But, not to dwell on scenes of future judgment,—how absolutely uncertain are the deep-laid plans of human wisdom, and the highest attainments of the ambitious and successful! Who, after the unexpected and overwhelming fate of Buonaparte, would have the folly to place the last stakes of life and happiness on the baseless calculations of the human understanding? It is true, indeed, uncertainty attends the life of the righteous, in regard to its particular measures, as well as that of the wicked; for God governs all events, and may soon disappoint our hopes in any instance, by changing the face of things, for reasons altogether beyond the reach of our conception. But the difference of condition between the righteous and the wicked is very great in two respects. First, the measures of the righteous are in their own nature of all others the most likely to be followed by immediate and complete success. Secondly, if other inscrutable designs should interfere with that success, yet the ultimate effect of things, and all the intermediate steps to it, even disappointment itself, however heavy and severe, will be found to be incomparably the best and most advantageous arrangement which could possibly have taken place with regard to the interested parties.

Fourthly, when we consider, that, though the events in question may be ranked among the most stupendous and important that ever occurred in the history of nations, and that, not-

withstanding this, they are, when viewed in themselves, of no lasting worldly consideration to any individual, but, on the contrary, consist of the vain elevation of one man upon the ruin of another, and of short-lived glory and prosperity to numbers, while to others they are occasions of misery and death; we are taught to inquire, whether there is not a more important meaning and design in all such transactions than appears to relate to the present world. Such revolutions are, indeed, necessary, as we have seen, not only for the comfort, but the very existence, of society. But what is society itself, with all its vaunted pleasure and splendour, unless man is immortal, and the present life intended as a preparation for another? No doubt the statesman and the veteran think the objects of their immense labours incomparably grand and momentous. But what are those objects, either to themselves, or to the separate individuals of the thousands of mankind for whom they exert their talents, whose life is short, vexatious, and uncertain? Why this mighty stir about peace and national prosperity, if the concerns of this mortal state must terminate in themselves, without the hope of a better?

But reason concurs with revelation to assure us, that God has made nothing in vain; that he is the Preserver of men, for the manifestation of his own perfections, and the righteous, benevolent, and gracious disposal of their persons, in a state infinitely above the present, affording the most ample scope and opportunity for exhibiting such purposes. If we consider the late long contest in the light of revealed truth, we shall see with what clearness and force the two things mutually expound each other. For example: "Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" We may also ask, Whence come these lusts themselves? Here the apostle sufficiently adverts to the fall and depravity of human nature, a doctrine which, as men continue unavoidably from age to age to be born in a corrupt state, implies the gift of an adequate Redeemer to deliver us from evil; and thus our very existence, as the posterity of fallen Adam, and, of course, the continuance of the world in which we live, are owing to the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. But if Christ died, that the race of mankind should not be cut off in Adam, it was not with the direct intention that they should pass

through life in misery: It was that they might be eternally saved through a Redeemer, and might thereby possess a happiness of a superior nature and security to that which was forfeited by the fall. Hence it is said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whatsoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The whole range of human existence stands, therefore, in a most direct and important relation to this great gift. To this it owes the whole of its immense privilege and value, as involving an entire deliverance from the guilt, the power, the being, and the punishment of sin; and an eternity of the most exalted perfection and happiness. The words just quoted also teach us, that "so great salvation" is obtained through faith in Christ. But "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" Thus the most important enterprise on earth is that of propagating the Gospel of Christ; an enterprise which pre-supposes a numerous race of ruined sinners, political governments, and the regular use of such means as are adapted to bring thinking beings acquainted with the great objects of faith and desire. And such beings, such governments, such means, appear to be appointed only for the sake of that inconceivably-grand result of things which we have already mentioned. When we add to all this the consideration, that by obedience to God during this mortal life, we may lay a good foundation against the time to come, and that even "our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal;"—when, I say, this also is considered, we see the true reason why God prolongs the being of the world, whether by means of war, when society is in danger, or through the varied authorities and charms of government in general.

Society might exist, and heaven be thereby ultimately peopled, without wars and fightings; but as in consequence of moral corruption such evils do arise, the Almighty Ruler and Saviour subjects them to his special control; and though in their own nature they would inevitably lead to the destruction of society, he absolutely over-rules them to the production

of the contrary effect; and they become the actual means of preserving mankind, as by the Divine government the evil corrects itself. He takes a scanty view of the subject, indeed, who sees no more in war than national defence, or conquest, or glory; and who only looks on peace as the source of domestic comfort, of trade, and of the sciences and arts. When God's judgments were abroad in the earth, we ought, while we acknowledged the protecting hand of Him who alone fought for us, to have also learned righteousness; righteousness, whether by that we mean "the faith which justifies the person in the sight of God," or "evangelical holiness in all its branches." But this is manifestly in reference to another and more important state. Even the men who are immediately employed in wars and national revolutions, are each of them in the meanwhile probationers for eternity. Every man is called to serve the Lord Christ, as well as his country, and to look upon his personal advantages, should he survive and be victorious,—or, on the other hand, to view defeat, privations, and death,—as the line of providence in which he is called to discharge important duties in the fear of God, his last Judge, and in preparation for a perfect and unchangeable state. Life is lent us, not for its own sake alone, but as an introduction to a nobler —an immortal—existence. In any other view, it is unworthy of God, and of the acceptance of men, at least of thousands, whose days and nights are one continued tissue of pain and distress. In the light of eternity all is clear, harmonious, magnificent, and infinitely worthy of being preserved, by the energies of war, and by a wise government in peace, against all aggressors, who would wickedly subvert it in any part of the world.

From all this it is evident, that few things, in the light of reason, are more extravagant and disproportionate, more foolish and ridiculous, than that exulting enthusiasm of enterprise and vaunting which relates to national defence and elevation, while the important connexion between present and eternal things is not at all recognised. It argues a contractedness of view, and a grossness of feeling, extremely inconsistent with a rational nature, and, in particular, with great and splendid talents. How preposterous, for instance, anxiously to use all possible means to promote and preserve health, and yet suffer it to run to waste in idleness and folly! How like a piece of insanity to ride with more than post-haste from one part of the country to another, as

if time were, indeed, reckoned the most valuable of all things, and at the close of the journey to sit down and do nothing, or something worse than nothing! Yet, equally extraordinary is the conduct of a people who, after making the most vigorous, the most brilliant and persevering efforts to maintain their independence, and promote their prosperity, sit down with the idea of enjoying the fruit of their labours, but without any right consideration of the true value of life, or without a proper purpose of acting a part in it, as the opening scene of a drama, that must disclose, in the sequel, unspeakably more awful and important transactions. It is for the sake of converting sinners, and of conferring on the saints still more abundant life,—life that consists in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," "joy unspeakable and full of glory,"—that the frame of nature is preserved in being. And when the counsels of God, with regard to his church, shall have been fulfilled, there will be nothing more among men worth superintending: "The heavens and the earth shall pass away with a great noise, and no more place be found for them."

A fifth lesson is the following: We have seen, that Providence involves in its own nature some distinct exhibition of the Divine perfections, and was, no doubt, designed, in part, for an actual display of the almighty Power and Godhead. So far we speculate, and not improperly. But to what will this amount, if we proceed not to moralize? The manifestation of the Divine glory is not, like the vain parade of man, produced solely for its own sake. This would be unworthy of the Deity, as a Being absolutely self-sufficient. We ought, therefore, to ask farther, What was the design of those perfections themselves, as thus pictured to the eye of man? Reason joins with Scripture to reply, that man is a being chiefly designed for moral perfection; that he is the only being on earth capable of recognising those displays of God and his attributes; and that, therefore, man ought to consider himself as eminently interested in every actual discovery which God is pleased to make of his own Divine perfections. Man ought to imitate them in the highest possible degree. For this purpose he ought to study them by the light of Scripture as they appear in themselves. He ought also to ascertain the exact relation in which he stands to them, and to feel the solemn weight of them on his heart and conscience, so as personally to realize every privilege which flows from them, and discharge the sacred obligations which they

impose upon him. Is God a Being with whom we have nothing to do? Or, is it a matter of no real consequence whether he love or hate us? Has he given us the most striking demonstration of his wrath against us? and shall we still remain unmoved, impenitent, rebellious? Again: Has he manifested an infinite pity, and mercy, and kindness, and love, and beneficence toward you and me especially, and shall we really and substantially make no requital, such as he has empowered and commanded us to make? Is gratitude an important and becoming consideration in every other case but this? Or, in all other instances do we expect it to be true, to be operative, and evinced in its own corresponding effects, and yet reduce it to a name and a shadow in every transaction which immediately relates to God? Let us rather, as reasonable, moral, accountable agents, whom God has redeemed by the precious blood of his Son Jesus, corrected by judgments, and soothed by the bounties of his infinite goodness, believe his truth, receive his mercy, fear his anger, love his holiness, trust his power, revere his justice, adore his greatness, yield to his will, admire his wisdom, and keep his commandments.

Considering the vast events now before us as under the direction of Almighty God, what an overwhelming idea do they give us of his majesty! This ought to be a prevailing sentiment in our contemplations on the subject. While artists are sedulously attempting to eternize the persons and feats of heroes, let a just and lively idea of the great God, and what he hath done, be imprinted on our hearts. Let poets celebrate their fellow-men in strains of well-earned applause, or of base adulation; but let us remember the deeds of the Almighty, and "talk of all his wondrous works." Historians, with different degrees of acuteness, will place the late events in the lights of human philosophy, and emblazon them for the admiration of distant ages: It is our duty, as private Christians, to speak of them to our children in the light of revelation, and that with all the pathos of admiring piety and devotion.

"Who would not fear thee, O Lord!" was the language of those who are represented in the text as contemplating the mighty works of God, in the operation and results of certain great commotions in human society; of "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, that stood on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." And what are we more

than these, that we should refuse to fear God, to "tremble at his word," to implore pardon at his hands, and to endeavour after universal holiness, lest we should offend so righteous and so good a Being? After all that we have lately witnessed of the Divine authority, and power, and mercy, are we still false professors of obedience to his commands, or profane opposers of his will, as revealed in the Gospel? Are ye such characters? Have ye, on innumerable occasions, as well as of late, seen this mighty power and authority, the truth and the vengeance of Him who rides upon the storm of the battle, to direct its motions, and determine its event? And do you still remain insensible and presumptuous? How wonderful is this! Would you not be astonished if wax refused to melt before the fire? if the tender leaves of the forest would not be moved by violent winds? How deplorable is your stupidity! How dreadful your audacity! Will you hear the word of God once more? I will present you, for your serious consideration, the most awful curse contained in the whole Bible. Do listen to it, I beseech you, and tremble while you apply it. Above all, seek redemption through faith in the atoning Lamb, while you quake to hear this most horrid of all possible denunciations: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: And they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

Finally: As we now resolve to adore the judgments, to secure the favour, and to study, revere, and conform to the laws and government of this dread Sovereign of all princes, and Ruler of all events, let us show, by a proper mixture of grateful joy, that we do so, in the genuine and happy spirit of the religion of Christ. Though we have cause to tremble, yet we have peculiar reason to rejoice. Gratitude is the most obvious duty of the time. Let our demonstrations of it be such as become the inhabitants of a Christian country. Thank God. Even the Philistines, when they had taken Samson, magnified

their Dagon; and, upon their victory over Saul, "they sent about to publish it in the house of their idols." The Heathen altars were never so loaden with sacrifices as on occasions of public victory and triumph.

As Britons, we have the highest cause of thankfulness; and the present intelligence of peace, like music, should banish every painful passion, and incline our minds to dwell on the numerous and unequalled blessings we enjoy as a people. Let us especially value that chief corner-stone of them all,—our liberty. If we will not observe its happy consequences, though we live in the midst of them, let us listen to the testimony of a sensible foreigner on this subject.* In the commencement of his book, entitled, "A Picture of England," he observes, "A certain German gives the following excellent definition of political liberty: 'I call free,' says he, 'that state in which no one is obliged to make any other sacrifice of his voluntary actions than that which is absolutely necessary to the preservation of the community; that state in which the necessary limitations are not made with partiality, but with unanimous consent, and solely with the view of augmenting the sum of the general good; that state which in the privileges it bestows on an individual, or on any rank, has regard only to the most conspicuous merit, or to the stability of government; in a word, that state in which the greatest number of powers can be displayed, and act in concert.' Now, I shall prove, in the course of this work, by incontestable facts, that this definition is more applicable to England than to any other country upon earth." If this be true, surely, such a blessing deserves a high preference in our Christian gratitude, and public acknowledgments. Let us consider this Divine gift of liberty, in connexion with the late happy victory by which it has been preserved to us, while, at the same time, the battle has all along been mercifully kept from our own gate.

To conclude: "Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God."

* De Archenholtz.

ON

THE GOSPEL:

OR,

THE SUBSTANCE OF A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

BRIDGE-STREET CHAPEL, BOLTON,

MAY 17TH, 1815,

AT THE FORMATION OF

THE MISSIONARY AUXILIARY SOCIETY,

IN THAT TOWN,

FOR THE MANCHESTER DISTRICT:

AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE DISTRICT-MEETING,
THEN ASSEMBLED.

"Go ye forth into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature."
JESUS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE illustrations and language of the following pages are, in some instances, entirely different from those which appeared when the subject was delivered. This is partly owing to its not having been previously designed for publication. It need hardly be observed, that where there is no written memorandum, it is difficult to give matters of this sort, after delivery, its original contexture and mien.

Some, while they deem this Discourse too long as a whole, will, perhaps, complain of the slight touches of its several parts. These defects are partly owing to this mode of instruction; a mode which, however, embraces overbalancing advantages. The copiousness of the subject also pressed the author with difficulties.

He is aware that other objections may be urged, according to the various tastes of readers. But, as truth has been his object from a child, should any one condescend to confute him, he should deem the instruction cheaply purchased, nor heave one sigh at the oblivion of his pamphlet. While, at any time, we peruse a feeble production, it might be well to keep in mind the following remarks, borrowed from another article:—

"He who reprobates the entire work of another, may be suspected of malignity; he who forbears to point out what is faulty in your pages from a fastidious fear of offending you, disregards your character, and is unfriendly to your interests. And he who withholds the praise that is due to particular parts, through his offence at certain blemishes, should be smiled at as an ignorant snarler.

"Longinus himself, whose perspicacity as a judge no author could elude, is yet a noble example of candour and generosity. Having simply pointed out the faults of Cecilius, as an author on the sublime, he observes: 'But, perhaps, this writer is not so much to be blamed for his omissions, as commended for his good designs and earnest endeavours.'"

The Divine mentioned p. 256, is Dr. Thomas Jackson, vicar of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The works of this uncommon man (in three volumes, folio, London, 1675) are an immense treasure of rational Divinity, and frequently written in a sublime strain of devotion. They may sometimes be had for a trifle.

STOCKPORT,
June 26th, 1815.

SERMON II.

The glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.—1 Timothy i. 11.

Both the text, and the design of our present meeting, seem to call our attention more especially to those general and comprehensive views of the Christian cause which, of all others, are best calculated to enkindle and support the flame of missionary zeal. Subordinate and particular views more aptly belong to the "daily ministrations" of the "word and doctrine."

Time, indeed, is rapid, and our own immediate salvation ought, in every instance of assembling for religious exercises, to occupy our attention in a very high degree. This ought to be the ground-work of every other duty. Nothing can justify the practice of calling a numerous people to the temple of Jehovah, with the professed purpose of uniting in his worship, and listening to his word, while the great and leading doctrines of the Gospel are withheld, to make room for the perpetual discussion of some point of public policy or benevolence. Such point, though perhaps important, cannot, of itself, be a subject of paramount interest to a promiscuous congregation, in whose ears we ought at all times to resound, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!"

Our text is, however, exclusive of its aspect on the subject of missions, exactly one of such high interest,—one truly of unbounded grandeur and importance. And the ardent encomiums which might be justly bestowed on this individual quotation, instead of detracting from the value of innumerable others of a similar description, would only serve to show the admiring student of the Scriptures, what an immense treasure is contained in his favourite volume.

Those "deep things of God," which, in all respects of essential consequence, infinitely transcend the entire system of the visible universe; which involve so vast a process of immortal grace as covers with contempt all the boasted secular affairs of mankind;

—" things of God," which had for ages eluded the most vigorous research of speculating reason ; and which, of all others, whether wished, or revealed, or imagined, or possible, are the most dear and interesting to the human race ;—such things, I say, though of a nature so heavenly, and so far removed from the apprehension of the senses, are here, without the help of a single figure, placed before the mind of the serious reader, in a perspicuous and commanding light.

Nor let this by any means be deemed an extravagant estimate of the text. No one can help loudly applauding the very choice and order of the expressions, while their united meaning presents us, (we rejoice to repeat the sentiment,) with a subject magnificent and rich without a parallel. In the compass of a dozen words, this truly great apostle has furnished us with historical detail, just and lively description, sublime doctrine, and the purest, the most comprehensive, and ennobling precept.

He is here led to his favourite theme, not only by judgment, but also by an imagination as divinely impressed as it was active and cultivated, and which caught at every opportunity of celebrating Christ or his Gospel. The scope of the verse, in connexion with its preceding subject, is this,—that Christianity, among other religious systems, is, in every point, pre-eminent. The law, both ceremonial and moral, he acknowledges was " good." Whilst it prevented crimes among the " lawless and disobedient," it served as a political preparation for the coming of the Messiah. It was also a correct, though partial and obscure, picture of the Christian scheme, descriptive of its plan, energy, and design. But this law of Moses was by no means intended as a rule of justification. Nor was it even a mandatory instrument of forming the character of the righteous, who serve God from a higher principle, from a newness of life which prompts them without command. This principle was only to be obtained by the Gospel, that " ministration of the Spirit," which in all respects was " rather glorious." The two institutions were, however, one, as bearing, though in different ways, on the grand design of all things,—the eternal happiness of mankind. The law forbade every thing contrary to " sound doctrine ;" and " sound doctrine," the apostle seems to assert, is " according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."

The object of this discourse is, to furnish, at least in part, an exposition of the text ; and, by this means, to impress

upon the attentive and sincere mind the nature and importance of missionary institutions. It deserves notice, that every distinct portion of the passage, it is hoped, will suggest a train of direct and powerful argument, which will not require a formal application, in favour of such Societies as that of which we have this day, with so much unanimity and feeling, laid the bases. May the presence of the God of missionaries be graciously vouchsafed to conduct and bless our meditations!

Without pretending to the most exact method, we beg leave to direct your attention to some obvious considerations on the leading parts, respectively, of which you perceive the text to consist: The Gospel; the Gospel of the blessed God; the glorious Gospel; and the Gospel committed to our trust. These objects, it is evident, can now be only superficially beheld. We may, at present, be compared to a company of persons hastening through a palace, or a picture-gallery, who have only time to glance at a multitude of objects by which they are apt to be dazzled and confounded.

I. THE GOSPEL EXPLAINED.

It, perhaps, should be observed, for the sake of perspicuity, that the considerations which successively present themselves on this branch of the subject, may be divided into such as bear some general relation to the Gospel itself; the preparation required for a saving reception of it; the style and manner of its communication; and its immediate effects on the mind of the receiver. Particulars of this sort naturally mark themselves in the course of a regular inquiry; these are minutely premised in compliance with the custom of pointing out the order of a sermon.

1. You need not be informed that the word here rendered "Gospel," means "glad tidings, or good news."

But the things which words are used to indicate, do not in every case include the full extent of the verbal import, and sometimes they go very far beyond it. This circumstance is unavoidable. For as no two things, in the whole range of existence, are in all respects equal, it follows, that if words and their subjects were required to correspond exactly and fully, we ought to have a distinct word for every individual thing in the universe; which is impossible.

We ought also to be cautious, lest we confound the true and real nature of a thing with the conception of it which

we frame in the mind. It is true, words express things; but if we observe the matter well, we shall find, that this is only done according to the notions or pictures which are formed of subjects in our thoughts, and not according to the things themselves in their own proper nature and extent. This may be reasonably presumed, since the soul, which gives the names, knows nothing of the things but by these notions, and therefore cannot give, at least, descriptive names to any portion of a subject which lies beyond the reach of the mind's conception. How should we know all things? or the whole of any one thing? The words of Scripture, though given by God, are, in the above respect, the same with others, because nicely suited to our present capacity.

It will not, therefore, be surprising if the thing called "Gospel" be, as to the whole of its nature and extent, incomprehensible, except to the Infinite Mind. We may rest satisfied, however, that enough is revealed to answer every purpose of present and eternal salvation.

From these remarks we may presume, that "Gospel," like many other words, though fixed as to its radical meaning, is used in different senses, while each of these senses must bear some relation to that meaning. Every peculiar signification, which attaches to this important word, will be found to contain some invaluable portion of good news; some deeply-interesting discovery of the love of God to wretched mankind.

So vast, indeed, is the general subject; and so numerous, so various, and so striking the aspects in which it may be viewed; that nothing could be more apt and convenient to the weakness of the human mind, than the different distinct avenues, which language affords, of approach to the immense paradise. It is true, we love to view it, occasionally, from some lofty and commanding station; and by means of the prodigious extent and grandeur of the prospect we experience an increasing meetness of character for a more complete enjoyment of it, and a corresponding disinclination to return to the common, dissipating world. But this is not the entire method by which God prepares us for the full possession of his glory. We must usually study the "redemption that is in Jesus," like every thing besides, as by parcels, and with some considerable patience of investigation.

"Gospel," in the New Testament, is sometimes confined to

the actual arrival of the Saviour in our world, to be the teacher and Redeemer of sinful men. "Behold," said the angel at his birth, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And St. Paul, in the commencement of his epistle to the Romans, has even carefully distinguished the Gospel, as simply implying the coming of the Messiah, from the prophecies concerning that event. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, (which [Gospel] he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures,) concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."

The word בשר, *besor*, in the Old Testament, which answers to Gospel in the New, means either "good" or "bad tidings," as may be seen, 1 Sam. iv. 17, and 2 Sam. iv. 10. Εὐαγγέλιον, *evangelion*, then, would seem to be a new word, describing a new thing, unknown before to the Jews; that is, a new event, of which, as having really taken place, they could, of course, have no information until it actually occurred. But that Messiah was to come, was no new thing to them. And though Gospel is clearly explained as signifying "good tidings of great joy," yet when we recollect that news is a prominent idea in the words, necessarily implying something really new, it will be sufficiently clear, that the fact of Christ's appearance among men is what we are strictly and properly to understand by "the Gospel."

We may, however, add, both for proof and illustration of the view here advanced, that *besor* radically means "flesh," while, at the same time, it signifies "the preaching of glad tidings unto all people," or "flesh." For this, it is observed by some of the learned, grammarians cannot easily give a reason. It falls not within the compass of their etymologies, as it involves not a primitive and a derivative, a principal and an analogical sense. The true reason of the case, perhaps, is this, that God did so ordain it, for the purpose of fore-shadowing the mystery of the Eternal Word becoming flesh, by verbal character, as well as by prophetic testimony; thus blending, in the same small word, two distinct and noble ideas of fact and doctrine, while the prophet announces, that "all flesh shall see the glory of the Lord."

The several subordinate senses of the term "Gospel" may be learned from the epithets, and other words, with which it stands

connected; and the reason of such senses may be perceived, at once, from the mention of the subject. We need only instance "the Gospel of God," "of the Son of God," "of the kingdom," "of peace," and "of salvation." These, and numerous other views, relating to the Gospel, all originate in the prime sense of "God manifest in the flesh," and are perpetually arresting our attention, as so many rays darting from an orb of light, through a cloud of other subjects which often intervene.

We ought, also, to observe, that the expression "Gospel" is sometimes used, in the New Testament, as meaning the whole scheme of redemption,—the true religion, in its amplest sense. This is evidently the sense in which it is occasionally used by theological writers and preachers. And, though the coming of Christ in the flesh is the foundation upon which the whole fabric of religion is erected,—the axis upon which the whole system turns,—it is, notwithstanding, difficult to take a rapid survey of the entire plan, without identifying its various branches with the stock from which they grow. In common language we are constantly using the cause for the effect, and the effect for its cause.

In illustration of this general sense it may be observed, that Christian and Mosaic truths are often evidently blended together; and the "Gospel," St. Paul asserts, "was preached unto Abraham." This apostle seems to include preaching, and all the affairs of Christianity, when, speaking of God, he says, "Whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son." Also, what, 1 Thess. i. 5, he calls, "our Gospel," he explains, chap. ii. 13, by observing, "We thank God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." And, doubtless, the general course of his public and private teaching, being far more extensive than his writings, contained every essential illustration of the evangelical scheme, in the ample round of its parts, and bearings, and relations.

The incarnation of the Son of God is the true cause of the very prophecies and numerous institutions respecting it, which, in point of time, took place before it It is even the proper moral cause of the actual communication of that love of God to man by which itself was projected and accomplished. Including, in its own important fact, the true principle and explication of the full harmony of all God's moral attributes in our salvation,

and being the grand legal condition upon which the very possibility of our pardon was at all presumable, it forms a kind of central point to the whole of the eternity and infinity of redeeming grace. Hence, it cannot be surprising if a general, though indefinite, idea of this extensive and complex undertaking should attach itself to the very mention of the term "Gospel."

But who shall tell how good was the message of glad tidings which the Jews first received of "Immanuel, God with us?" Christ contains in himself the perfection of all that which they deemed valuable in religion; the perfection of truth, of priesthood, of sacrifice, of holiness, of wisdom, of power, of love; a perfection of mercy to guilty and condemned sinners: For, Him "God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past."

This amazing news announces all that is good, in all senses of the term. If that term mean "fitness for the end designed," as in the parts, respectively, of the material creation, when God beheld and pronounced them "very good," what so calculated, in every point of light, to redeem the ruined race of man as God incarnate, the Teacher of the sublimest truth, the grand Example of that truth embodied in himself, a full atonement and propitiation for the sins of the whole world, a Guide, and Friend, and Judge, and final Saviour, of all who believe in him? If it signify "moral excellence," who is comparable to Christ both for variety and measure of it? If its import be "benevolence," can imagination picture a character like him, who, when no man took it from him, "laid down his life for the sheep?" He is the good of all the goodness which exists besides his own; the sole glory of a revelation incomparably glorious. Without his life, as brightly shining in the Gospels, and clearly reflected in the apostolical epistles, the Scriptures would be like the creation, during its first three days, which only glimmered with an attenuated and imperfect light; but, with that grand addition, they appear like the creation on the fourth day, when God, collecting the scattered rays in his hand, "made two great lights, and set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth."

2. But, though the message which announces the arrival of a Divine Saviour be thus, in itself, incalculably good and important, it is not actually such, in respect of those to whom it is sent, without a moral preparation for the due reception of it. The Gospel is by no means good in the estimation of sceptical

and profane persons: With a vitiated taste they denominate the sweetest or most wholesome food, as bitter and pernicious. The light of heaven, and all the varied beauties of a summer-scene, are only good to him who opens his eyes to behold them. In like manner, "if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost,"—to them that are insensible, abandoned, and incorrigible. On the contrary, the Gospel is good, experimentally and fully, to the penitent sinner. Christ himself has most exactly pointed out, in a number of particulars, this suitableness and correspondence between the message and the moral disposition of those who are duly prepared to receive it. "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Thus we find, that John prepared the way of the Messiah by preaching the baptism of repentance. A similar preparation must take place in every heart that would be eligible for a saving reception of the Lord Jesus. And the plan of redemption has provided means sufficient for effecting this repentance in the whole race of sinners. The Old Testament is an uniform exposure of the innate depravity and wickedness of mankind. It also frequently describes the consequent ruin and danger in a most alarming manner. Those very parts of the plan which disclose Divine love and pity powerfully concur in this operation. Indeed, there can be no true repentance where there is no hope of mercy. And, can any thing so forcibly penetrate the heart with a sense of remorse as the dying pangs of Him "who loved us and gave himself for us?" This is "the goodness of God which leadeth to repentance;" which melts down the thoughtful and ingenuous sinner into one congenial feeling of sorrow and contrition, and gives him an aptness to apprehend, to relish, and embrace the slightest offer of salvation. Above all, to hasten and complete the work beyond the highest attainments of unassisted humanity, the Holy Spirit is given to men "to convince them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."

In like manner faith, which is a fruit of the same Divine light and influence, is indispensably necessary to a right reception of

the Gospel. This faith must commence in a due knowledge and conception of Christ as the appointed Saviour, clearly described, and most freely and generously offered, in the Scriptures. Rising from the simple state of an enlightened apprehension, it becomes an ardent sentiment of desire; and continuing the struggle, it assumes the character of confident appropriation according to the estimated rank and importance which the record God has given of his Son sustains in the scale of moral and religious truths. And this record will be valued according to the degree of true repentance which inspires the individual, and the view which the mind takes of the goodness, the wisdom, the power, and the faithfulness of Him who gives the record. Thus, though faith as a grace, together with the whole affair of our salvation, may be strictly termed "the gift of God," yet it forms a regular connexion with the rational and sensitive powers, understanding and judgment, will and affections; all which go to form the active and practical character. In short, it is "believing with the heart unto righteousness, and making confession with the mouth unto salvation." But a particular elucidation of faith, or of repentance, cannot be expected here. It is sufficient for our present purpose that we have given a general idea of their important connexion with the Gospel, as a message of mercy to sinners of every kind. It was proper to suggest, that from the nature of the message, and of its object, —the salvation of a world of ruined minds,—these graces could not be dispensed with. And he who hopes to be saved through any other reference or influence of the good news which the Bible proclaims, might as reasonably expect that God should people the earth with perfect men in a moment, to prevent the corporeal pains and mental silliness of youth; and form the fruits of the field by his omnipotent power at once, without the circuitous medium of sunshine and shower.

3. But if the nature of this message suggest the necessity of these two Christian graces, they, in turn, imply the necessity of some reciprocating influence in the message to excite and promote them. We have already given hints on this part of the subject, in referring to the humbling details of the Old Testament, and the softening tendency of the love of God in the New. The scheme is too consistent, too perfect, not to have furnished every requisite provision.

The preaching of the Gospel is often, indeed, accompanied

with the extraordinary and sometimes irresistible energies of the Holy Spirit, operating in a manner infinitely superior to the common slow procedure of the moral process. "Our Gospel," says the apostle to the Thessalonians, "came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." On this branch of the subject, as connected with the expression "Gospel," Dr. Adam Clarke has formed a shrewd historical conjecture, worthy of his original mind. As the sense of incantation was sometimes given to the term "spell," the learned Doctor conceives it probable, that our ancestors were led to apply the phrase "God's spell" to the message of salvation, as preached to them by Christian missionaries, from the extraordinary effects which it rapidly produced upon the hearts and lives of the people.

But though great effects are sometimes produced by small means, yet there must have been some fitness in the Gospel, as an instrument, for the accomplishment of its designs. Perhaps I shall incur the smile of fastidious criticism, if I presume to add another conjecture respecting the shape and mode in which the message was delivered. We will, then, suppose the message to imply a clear, distinct, and forcible narration of its contents. We expect all news of importance to be communicated in this manner. It appears that "spell" at first meant no more than speech in general. In process of time it came to mean a set narration, as used in the proclaiming of some law, or the recital of some tale of the marvellous, to which the Saxons, like other rude nations, would listen with attention, different persons in the company taking each his spell, or turn, in the delivery of some interesting story. To this day we say "a speech," as distinguished from common conversation. The same sense of the term was used, as already observed, in the solemn repetition of a charm. We still say to a child who cannot pronounce readily and correctly, "Spell the word," by which we mean, according to the present conjecture, "Make a speech of it;" that is, Pronounce every part of it with attention, distinctness, deliberation, and interest; let not a letter be lost, that the entire meaning, with regard to pronunciation, may be clearly apprehended, and the collective force of the whole duly felt.

With this view of things the Gospel exactly accords. Nothing can commend itself more effectually to the understanding and common feelings of mankind than the Book of God at

large. And what can be more touching, or more commanding, than the history of the life and death of Jesus? The Christian ordinances are few, simple, and significant. And the ambassadors of this high message are minute and clear in their details, pointed in their applications, and earnest in their whole address. In all this the wisdom of God joins hands with his goodness. The Gospel is commanded to be preached to "every creature," including the ignorant, the thoughtless, and the wicked. Now any subject addressed to such characters ought to be sufficient to command their attention, and level to the lowest and most uncultivated intellect. Such a subject is the Gospel. At the very first view, it brings irresistible evidence of its magnitude and interest, and, by this means, lays the beholder under strong obligation to institute a full inquiry concerning it;—to spell it out for himself, under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ,—that meek and lowly Teacher,—till he can fully understand, and feel, and pronounce it. Every individual of mankind who is possessed of a portion of mental sanity or reason has a capacity to know, a will that might embrace, and a heart which could relish and enjoy the blessings of salvation, though, perhaps, he neither understands the several meanings of the term "faith," nor could give a logical definition of any of the sacred feelings with which, in experience, it always stands connected. Such knowledge is no more indispensably necessary, than a perfect knowledge of the mathematics is requisite for a carpenter, that he may work his timber properly; or a complete understanding of the doctrine of meteors, for one engaged in agriculture, to enable him to improve the different seasons, in the cultivation of his lands. We may hence conclude the Gospel to be calculated for all meridians; and it is saying very little to observe, that the attempt to diffuse it all over the barbarous as well as civilized world, is a very feasible undertaking.

4. This Gospel, so admirably contrived and, in all respects, so full of its Divine Author, must, no doubt, be productive of answerable effects. Small as the plant may be deemed to be at present, it will grow, and fill immensity, and flourish throughout eternity. Its immediate consequences are incalculably important. It "is the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation" now. "The poor have the Gospel preached to them;" that is, are evangelized, are transformed by its influence, imbued with its subject, have received the proper impress of the truth which it

contains, have imbibed its healing, its purifying, its renovating spirit. As, by the miraculous energy of Christ, the blind actually received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the dead were raised up; so really and truly, with all due effect upon their souls, did the poor receive the Gospel.

To use the thoughts, if not the very language, of a great divine,—"The glory of the Godhead, bodily dwelling and personally shining in the man Christ Jesus, is a truth so clear, so sweet, and so solid, as, in the first moment of its distinct apprehension, will throughly quench our extreme thirst after knowledge; and, at once, more fully satiate all our desires, whether of truth or goodness, than the light of the sun in his strength doth the appetite of sight. And this view of truth and goodness will enlarge our capacity to comprehend ten thousand times more than before it could. So forcible, again, is the attractive influence thence diffused throughout the soul, as will perfectly unite our most distracted appetites or inclinations into one main flame of desire to continue holy as he is holy.

"And who can estimate the joy which arises from the knowledge of Christ Jesus? There is a refined pleasure in any proper exercise of the human understanding. It must be so, because the truth of science is as truly derived from God as that of holiness itself. When Pythagoras first found a certain principle in mathematics, he expressed the greatness of his joy by a magnificent sacrifice to the gods, from whom he believed the revelation to have come. Yet the most admirable principles of human science are only shadows of those solid truths which are contained in the mystery of godliness. The knowledge of science often terminates in contemplation. Like music, it vanishes with the present motion; it leaves no permanent mirth behind. On the contrary, the meditation of the mystery of godliness imprints the characters of God himself upon the mind, and instils the sweet influence of life and joy through all its powers. Besides, it is an inexhaustible fountain, whose current, even in this life, increases in proportion to our desire and capacity; and, in the world to come, it will be found expanded into an ocean of everlasting life.

Such is the very deficient outline which we have presumed to draw of the Gospel,—a subject more than commensurate with the powers of an angel. And such is the immense gift which it is our present high prerogative to pass from the hand of God, to the poor and miserable Heathen.

II. ON THE GOSPEL AS CONNECTED WITH ITS AUTHOR.

We have assumed this connexion in what has been already said. The pointed mention of it, however, in the terms of the text, and its peculiar importance, will entitle it to a separate examination. If there be not much unity in the matter of the following remarks, they will at least be allowed to be the obvious and most important suggestions of the words, agreeably to our purpose of expounding the general subject.

1. Christianity is called, "the Gospel of the blessed God," as touching its truth and authenticity. This is of vital moment to the success of the Gospel, whatever be the professed value of the good news announced to us. What kind of evidence is requisite and sufficient, may be gathered from the capacity and condition of the persons to whom the message is addressed. Considering the actual state of the mass of mankind with regard to intellect and moral feeling, we might reasonably presume, before the fact, that the Gospel would convey its own evidence in a mere perusal of the Scriptures. But a vast amount of experience puts the point beyond all doubt. There is something in the human heart which responds to all the sentiments of the Bible, even amidst the great depravity which refuses to embrace them. We are unquestionably so constituted as to perceive and feel the truth of Christianity upon the very first unprejudiced and sincere examination. The Bible constantly supposes we are previously possessed of some general principles, notions, and feelings of eternal truth. God says to wicked men, "Come, let us reason together." If we have not innate ideas, we are possessed of innate faculties, of a capacity of attention, of understanding, and of emotion. And the Bible is characterized with irresistibly-impressive features of honesty, consistency, and purity. It is perfectly right it should be so. Men in general cannot enter upon profound and lengthened argumentation. Time is short, and they ought to proceed as soon as possible to action. Indeed, as some have well observed, we shall scarcely turn aside to view the external evidences of a system of which the intrinsic excellence has not in some measure struck upon the senses of our soul.

But common sense, without experience, without the help of great sagacity, and of learning, and of knowledge, by the mere logic to which it leads, will form a judgment in favour of the truth of the Gospel. The books of Scripture could not, as a

forgery, have been composed and palmed upon mankind, in any one age of the world, because numbers of them expressly refer to the others as having existed in former times, and as being well known. And if they were written in different ages, the one demonstrates the truth of the preceding ones by an immediate appeal to the world, of the truth of passing events, long since predicted. And, notwithstanding the difference of times, of places, of writers, of subjects, and of other circumstances relative to the books of Scripture, there exists a remarkable unity throughout the whole, as to the facts of its history, and the nature of its doctrines and precepts,—a unity which shows it to be the work of one Infinite Artist. And as to the conflicting opinions which exist in the Christian world on the several parts of the plan of redemption, they are not more remarkable than others which are urged by philosophers on the theory of the universe. It appears, then, that, with respect to evidence, the Gospel may be confidently offered to the Heathen world, in hopes of their receiving it, perhaps, with more successful attention than has been shown by thousands in Christendom, who may have been accustomed, for a long period of their youth, to view its most interesting exhibitions with a prejudice against it, and a growing dislike of its whole system.

2. An inquiry into the truth of a religion seems to presuppose the existence of false ones; and, having ascertained which is genuine, men usually proceed, with a kind of intuitive confidence, to contrast it with others.

Ours is not the religion of an impostor like Mahomet; it is that of the "blessed God." It comes immediately from God, without even the instrumentality of a servant, such as Moses. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." In fact, our religion is God, "God manifest in the flesh." It contains nothing unworthy of him. It bears his perfect image expressly in every part. It is the religion of adequate mercy to miserable sinners, —mercy clearly explained, and forcibly authenticated. It is "the Gospel." Other religions merely presume some mercy, which, at the same time, seems to demand the most cruel of all conditions, while guilt and fear continue, with increasing horrors, in the heart of the wretched worshipper.

Here an immense prospect of strikingly-contrasted religions

opens to our view. We could like, at least, to enter upon it. But time requires us to shift the scene. We beg leave, however, to refer you, for satisfaction on the subject, to Dr. Ireland's "Westminster Lectures," and the Rev. Edward Ryan's "History of the Effects of Religion on Mankind."

3. The pre-eminent characters of this religion may be gathered from a consideration of its proper source, which is the "blessed," or happy, "God." This expression shows, at once, that the Gospel is a system of the purest benevolence; and that, being full of the blessedness of its Author, it is directly calculated to promote the perfection and happiness of our nature. I must here beg leave again to compress a few sentiments, taken from the admirable writer alluded to on a former occasion.

"In the infinite God,—the incomprehensible sphere, which hath ubiquity for its centre, and omnipotence for its axis, whose unnumbered and immeasurable lines are all possible perfections, —there is no place for exorbitance. One branch of being cannot mis-sway and overtop another; all being so great and firm, that none can be greater or firmer. And because, therefore, he can neither fear the impairment, nor wish the enlargement, of his own estate, all outward employments of his power are for the good of his creatures. His will to have them when they were not, was but the influence of his essential goodness; which is so abundantly sufficient to his own infinite being, that the overflowing of it is the fountain of all things besides which are good.

"Now, since our own proper being, or existence, is the foundation of that true happiness which flows from more especial participation of God's presence, as experienced by means of the Gospel, wherever he hath laid the one, it is—to all who rightly consider his wisdom, truth, and goodness—an assured pledge of his will and pleasure to finish it with the other. And as his nature is immutable, so are his gifts without repentance. The current of his joyful beneficence can admit no intermission, much less any admixture of evil. Woe and misery must seek some other original; they have no hidden vent or secret issue from the ocean of joy and happiness.

"But those who wilfully strive against the stream of his overflowing goodness, or boisterously counterblast the sweet and placid inspirations of celestial influence, become creators of their own woe, and raise unto themselves those storms in which they perish. Yet, so essential is it for this immense Fountain of

goodness, however provoked, to send forth only streams of life; and such is the virtue of the streams which issue from him; that as well the miseries which miscreants procure themselves, as their mischievous intentions towards others, infallibly occasion increase of joy and happiness to all who give free passage to their current. And this current never dries up, is never wasted by diffusion. The more it is checked by opposition of the sons of darkness, the more plentifully it overflows the sons of light. All the good which one class of men put from them returns in full measure to the other."

In this astonishingly-benevolent and disinterested manner, with an inconceivable freeness, without the least mixture of natural, moral, or political necessity, hath "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

4. Though all good proceeds from God, all is not, strictly speaking, God himself. Besides, among the endless dispensations of his bounty, there is a gradation of evidence concerning his regard toward us, and of his presence and love as associated with the various instances of his beneficence. In the most eminent sense, however, is our holy religion the "Gospel of God." He said to his apostles, when he commissioned them to preach it, "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world," It follows, that He imparts, directly from his own presence, the entire energy of its doctrines and ordinances; and accompanies the whole of its institutions with his sanction and blessing.

Among the numerous deductions which flow from this single view of the subject, one must press upon us with instant force,—the real characters of Divinity and of sacredness which attach to the Gospel; and, consequently, the seriousness and awe with which, at least, it ought to be treated. Whoever will approach this dread temple must proceed with great solemnity of demeanour, and with the deepest possible feelings of veneration. Its very threshold, its most distant corners, its meanest stones, are illuminated with the omnipotent majesty of Him who dwelleth in the midst of it. This is infinitely more than a relative sanctity, arising from a formal consecration; the whole fabric is really impressed with the tremendous presence of God; and no part of the sublime service conducted within its hallowed walls can admit of the very shadow of the indecent flippancies which frequently characterize the manners of mankind.

It is true, the whole creation is of God, but not in that high

sense of the terms which applies to the Gospel; and, though we ought always to associate the being of the grand Cause of all things with the visible world,—with every atom of the dust which is blown by the winds,—yet, as the Gospel is absolutely God himself, reduced, as it were, to certain clear, distinct, and intelligible dimensions, we ought to be converted into one entire feeling of reverence and devotion, when we turn our attention to religious objects and acts.

Of the awful reverence which was paid to sacred things under the Mosaic law you cannot be uninformed: The very Heathens manifested a similar, though perverted, sense of solemnity, in the worship of their deities; and in great undertakings, even of counsel and war, they identified the cause with that of the gods, and, acknowledging their supremacy, solemnly implored their assistance. The Gospel, with its expressive institutions, is unquestionably associated with the grandest exhibition and energy of the Divine Presence, and that in proportion to the importance of those appointments, severally considered. In this respect, for instance, the sacramental supper ranks high, as an exercise of personal and relative godliness,—an exercise which involves a sublime communion with the Deity, and an union of various graces, in one individual act.

On a similar principle, our religious meetings on the present occasion, both as to their object and their immediate influence on the mind, may be justly placed among the most important of human assemblies. They may be compared to the famous altar which the emperor Justinian is said to have erected in honour of the Saviour, and which consisted of an assemblage of all kinds of precious stones and metals which the richest magazines of the world could then produce. Such meetings bring all possible excellence into one point of view, and excite the powers of moral action to the highest degree of tension. We now propose—let angels listen to the god-like project!—to send the Gospel of salvation to the whole world! We strive to do so under a due sense of its majesty and worth. We feel the importance of our design, in the sacred influence which attends us. We are doing a great work: Let us not go down to the fashion and spirit in which the secular affairs of men are frequently conducted. Our unusual devotion must not be disturbed. No wit and merriment, no clamour and confusion, no pompous display of talent, must be indulged or countenanced on this solemn and momentous occasion.

III. THE GOSPEL VIEWED AS A GLORIOUS SYSTEM.

HERE, for want of time, we can hardly enter upon the scene, though it is one of uncommon interest; one where sublimity and beauty of a superior order cannot fail to give a heavenly and ennobling impulse to the contemplative and pious mind; and one in which we may delight to expatiate without the liability of sinking into fatigue and distaste. Here all that is great in thought, grand and holy in imagination, and rapturous in feeling, find a proper place. Here admiration, though ineffable, can never be excessive; and in proportion to the loftiness of our conceptions will be the depth of our humility. Indeed, nothing can be more purifying or strengthening to the mind than frequent views of this great subject. The following is a faint sketch of its principal features, which we shall do well to fill up by the meditations and researches of our whole life.

1. What can be more glorious in contemplation, than the plan and history of the Gospel in its entire scheme? The eternal salvation of a world is unquestionably a grand object. The actual details of this undertaking are the most extraordinary that can possibly be imagined. The creation was a noble work of the Deity, and the heavens and the earth are still "telling the glory of God." But redemption is a second world of peculiar wonders, built upon the ruins of the first. Nothing can so enchain the attention and fill the grasp of the human mind, as the subjects involved in that Divine exclamation, "Behold, I make all things new;" the councils of the eternal Trinity; the proclamation of grace in paradise; a long race of sons of God, of patriarchs, of prophets, of apostles, of martyrs, and of saints, coeval with time itself; the everlasting Son of the Father become a Teacher of men, and expiring on a cross as their substitute; a vast variety of miracles, of revelations, of ceremonials, and of influences; the ultimate conversion of all nations to Christ; the final resurrection and judgment of mankind; and an eternity of joys in heaven. These things must be allowed to be more glorious than the most shining career of princes and heroes; than the machinery of poets themselves. Yet here is no fiction. And here is a drama in which we are all actors of importance.

2. That must be glorious which communicates glory. It is by the Gospel that all things are not only kept in being, but have a clear and important meaning attached to them,

a fitness and design worthy of their existence. Since the Gospel has appeared, numerous mysteries of great moment have been amply unfolded. We can now account for every thing. Concerning those things of which we cannot see the reasons, we are perfectly satisfied that reasons do exist, and reasons infinitely worthy of "the only wise God," and of his nature and purpose as the author of the Gospel. The whole course of nature shines by reflection of "the Sun of righteousness." By his all-penetrating light we shall see why *moral* evil was permitted, and why *penal* still continues and assumes such various forms. In short, the Gospel will clearly expound the whole volume of existence. There is not a weed in the wilderness, a drop of water in the ocean, a mineral in the bowels of the earth, nor a star in heaven, which will not receive from this "glorious Gospel" a clear and satisfactory explanation.

3. But the communicated glory of the Gospel is most distinguished in man himself. As the noblest piece of workmanship in the creation, and as awfully degraded through guilt and depravity, he admits, both as to character and condition, of a very ample scope for the operation of the Gospel. Among men, those plans and feats are glorious which procure the political freedom, or advance the honour and prosperity, of nations. It is only, however, in the system of human redemption that we see grand public effects produced in the highest possible perfection: A system this, which strikes at the very root of all moral evil; which forms the human character to excellence by a process as rapid as it is effectual; which aims at nothing short of a complete victory over sin and the devil; and which, while it banishes disorder, and pain, and death from the universe, creates, for the reception of mankind, "a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

4. It is no small glory, that the great moral effects just adverted to are produced by operations suprisingly simple, and by means incalculably disproportionate. It is true, God himself is the cause; but "he moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform." He at first "commanded the light to shine." And now he "hath himself," not merely by a circuitous medium, "shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The Scriptures, because they contain the Gospel, and go to the very core of the human heart, have done more to regenerate mankind than all the numerous folios of statutes that were

ever issued by legislators. What an amazing thing, that twelve poor fishermen, and their successors in the ministry, should entirely change the face of the world! "The excellency of the power is," indeed, "of God;" it is, notwithstanding, "in earthen vessels." Should we not be astonished to see a child tear up mountains by the roots, or discomfit an army? Still more extraordinary are the institutions of the Gospel, as diminutive instruments of an immense power. The Gospel is the true sublime. It involves wonderful extremes. The death of a despised Jesus is the life of the world; to fall in the contest is really to conquer; the ignominious cross is the standard of glory; and the power of God is made perfect in the weakness of men.

5. The Gospel affords the grandest display of the Divine perfections. It is the most glorious work of the most glorious of all beings. This, indeed, is no great matter to the carnal mind, though, perhaps, "wise and prudent." Both philosophers and poets, unless they form their conceptions on an evangelical view of God, must comparatively dwell on the surface of things. Men admire God in the creation, because it strikes their senses, but are not sufficiently rational and holy to admire his moral attributes, as blended with his wisdom and power; just as the populace admire the visible magnificence of a court, while they feel no particular inclination to appreciate the form of government, or to set a proper value on the greatness and virtues of the sovereign himself. It is not so with the subjects of the kingdom of God. They behold "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: Righteousness and peace meeting together, mercy and truth kissing each other." They are astonished to contemplate, that God is not only good and gracious, but also "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and by the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." To such persons the covenant of grace is full of glorious mysteries of the Divine wisdom, power, holiness, and love, which eternity alone can fully realize and explain.

6. It is, indeed, a noble consideration, that, whatever be the glory which we now enjoy in our experience of the Gospel, or can conceive as capable of being produced by it, there is still something more glorious beyond our conception. The glory of this world is confined to a point of time, and of space. It is soon seen in its whole extent. It is soon exhausted. The more it is examined, the less glorious it appears, till all its boasted brightness is changed into a cloud of darkness. The Gospel,

on the contrary, unfolds new splendour and importance at every fresh examination, and we have the absolute certainty, that it can never be exhausted. "Age cannot wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety." And this perpetual thought of what is still to be enjoyed, greatly multiplies the pleasure of what is now in our possession. Wandering over the scene, and delighted with its beauties, we ascend the first eminence in hope of adding to the extent and variety of the prospect. We are again enraptured; but another mountain in the distance sets another boundary to the sight. We hasten on as before, and are increasingly gratified, and animated to pursue the never-ending journey. We may congratulate each other throughout eternity, and say, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant."

How, then, can we withhold the apostolical exclamation, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

IV. THE GOSPEL COMMITTED TO OUR TRUST.

This trust was not confined to the apostles. When Christ said, "Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," he added, "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world." Consequently, the words are in perpetual force. This work eminently devolves on all who are engaged in the Christian ministry. The Gospel is their grand deposit. It is their high duty to defend its truth, to guard its purity, to enforce its doctrines, and to promote its circulation. But what can ministers do without the people? The apostles themselves could not have continued to labour, without the encouragement and joint assistance of their converts. We, therefore, call upon the whole religious public to feel responsible for the due discharge of this great and arduous undertaking.

It is asked, "Why should a work of this vast importance be entrusted to fallible men?" Such questions, if sceptically proposed, are indecorous. The reply is, however, both necessary and instructive. The Divine will would be sufficient to justify the fitness of the appointment, in the estimation of all humble and teachable Christians. The church is divinely constituted the pillar and ground of truth. It is "a tree bearing fruit, whose seed is in itself." But the reasons why the Gospel is entrusted to men for its propagation are obvious and strong.

1. The Gospel was designed for rational beings, as such. This will, no doubt, be admitted. It would, indeed, be easy to

show, that the whole of human guilt, original sin excepted, lies in the abuse of human reason. Who, then, so fit as one of our own kind to be the organ of communicating the noblest truths? Not an angel. We could not approach him. We should be quite alarmed. We could not sympathize with his manner of address. Besides, if we could, the whole case would be a sort of compulsion rather than a due exercise of our moral freedom in a persuasive appeal to our rational powers.

2. Again: The Gospel being committed to our trust for the purpose of extending the knowledge of it, we are called to the honour of joining issue with God himself in converting the world; of resembling him, not only in conduct, but also in the grand governing qualities of our nature. Among these, benevolence holds a high place, and has, accordingly, received the most enthusiastic praises of all ranks of men in every age. But missionary benevolence is that by which we imitate the Deity in the most exalted point of his infinite perfections. When we relieve the bodies of mankind we copy him as Creator and Preserver; in our attempts to convert them to Christianity, we resemble him as a Saviour, who "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," and who sacrificed much more than property, and ease, and honour—even life itself—in the fulfilment of his mission to redeem the world.

3. Other reasons might be mentioned, but we must now content ourselves with one more. The trust in question is a grand means of promoting our own religious interests. Being called to take an active part in the salvation of others, we are continually reminded of the nature and importance of religion, and of the necessity, the advantage, and consistency, of using equal energies in obtaining for our own souls the utmost fulness of a blessing so universally important. Besides, the faithfulness, the diligence, but more especially the extensive piety and benevolence, which this trust involves, abundantly enlarge the sphere of our duty. Now, duty of every description is incalculably advantageous, both as to the influence with which it is accompanied, and the consequences which arise from it, especially in the rewards of heaven. He who gives to another in the spirit of genuine benevolence is literally and truly the greatest receiver. The enlargement of our duty is, therefore, a consideration of the highest value to ourselves.

And this extension of our responsibility is of peculiar use in

giving additional strength to our virtue and piety in general, and, consequently, multiplying the probabilities of our perseverance in the ways of God. Some people are amazed at the strength of memory in persons of extensive knowledge, not considering that every new idea gives an increase of firmness to all those notions and impressions which previously existed in the mind, through a certain evident connexion by which it stands related to the whole of them, provided the person has pursued his studies systematically, and generalized his thoughts agreeably to regular principles. In like manner, the enlargement of duty tends to strengthen the whole class of our virtues and graces, as a building is the more stable and compacted in proportion to the number of its interior walls and apartments.

It is chiefly on this principle, for instance, that the state of matrimony is preferable to celibacy. A state so divinely social gives existence and full play to some of the noblest natural affections, which form an extended ground for the operations of grace and virtue; and the mind feels as if it had greatly increased the dimensions of its own proper entity or being. Even the cares and afflictions which arise out of the state are often, on this account, the most important parts of the moral trial. The same principle applies to the comparatively-extended duties of a master, a magistrate, a minister of the Gospel, or a rich man, whose situation enables him to improve and dilate his virtue far beyond the limits by which a poor man is confined. Missionary benevolence is, however, a noble course of god-like action, in which we may all successfully contend for the prize. Let us, then, enlarge the scene of the operation of our Christian virtues, by putting both our hearts and property into the immense design of converting the whole of the human family to God and his Christ. Here is scope for all our activities, and, consequently, for our highest growth in grace, and the attainment of the noblest happiness of our own minds.

Some farther observations relating to this trust cannot well be omitted. It obviously implies the existence of rules and limits connected with the discharge of our duty concerning it. Trustees have their instructions given them, which they must not fail to observe to their full extent, and which they must not overstep. In our endeavours to convert the Heathen, we must preach no other Gospel beside that which God hath committed to us; nor must we preach it in any other manner than that which he hath exemplified and taught. Hence,

considering the difference of opinion in the Christian world respecting the Gospel, it seems most eligible and proper, that each denomination should send forth missionaries suited to their own views.

Lastly. This trust implies, in justice and propriety, that those in whom it is reposed possess every requisite qualification and facility for the accomplishment of its designs. What monarch attempts to extend his conquests by calling unfit men to the command of his forces? Even heroes must be put in a condition to act by being furnished with every assistance. Thus God has dealt with us for the spread of his Gospel. The work is by no means either impracticable, or unpleasant, or unprofitable. It is the complete reverse of all these.

That God has made us capable of the most enlarged and disinterested benevolence, is a noble consideration, and one which ought to awaken all our endeavours to acquire the liveliest zeal for the salvation of the world. We must acknowledge that self-love gives a mighty bias to the mind. It is, however, according to an original law of our nature, that we enter feelingly into the interests of others just on the same principle, and from the same motive, which operate when we enter into the future interests of ourselves. We have, indeed, a real interest in futurity, which we have not in the welfare of others; but we must, by the force of reason and grace, carry our minds forward to it, beyond our present existence, before we can be affected by it. In like manner, when the interests of another are to be properly attended to, we must, as it were, go out of our present selves to meet them and reflect upon them. We desire good and avoid evil, as such, without regard to persons; and the sole reason why we do not feel for others as we do for ourselves is, that we do not sufficiently consider and appreciate what concerns them. It is for a similar reason, that certain bodily complaints procure less pity than others, because they are not of the most frequent occurrence, and we have had less opportunity of ascertaining the real portion of evil which they contain. It was by a due consideration of the state and interests of mankind; a right use of attention, of reason, and of imagination, under the direction of genuine religion; that the characters of the great Howard, of Wesley, of St. Paul himself, and of all the celebrated benefactors of the human race, were formed. And God has furnished us with the same sort of capabilities, for which we also are responsible.

But God himself absolutely works with us in our missions. Let us, then, proceed with confidence to our part of this great co-operation. Many prophecies and promises are completely on our side, and he will help us by his grace and Holy Spirit, as he does in the more private affair of our own salvation. He will do so by binding satan, which probably he always does in great revivals of his work. It is surely consistent with wisdom and justice, and with the general mercy of God, that he should, according to his own good pleasure, manifest his goodness pre-eminently at certain times. Here is no reprobation, no injury whatever done to any individual. And as to Providence, the Christian world has of late years experienced a signal concurrence of events in favour of missionary designs; a concurrence which has demonstrated the contrivance and purpose of God himself in this great business. The success of the Methodist Missions abundantly confirms this; a success unexpected, and absolutely unexampled, in the history of missions. Twenty thousand converts in the West Indies alone, and two hundred and sixteen thousand in America, besides a more immense number who attend with them every sabbath-day on the ministry of the word, are the fruit of the Divine blessing on your former efforts. The Gospel is still committed to your trust, and God still enables you to execute the work. Let us think of these things, and give ourselves wholly to them.

V. CONCLUSION.

We must now dismiss the subject with the following thoughts. Though mere hints of inference from the whole, their importance cannot fail to strike the pious and considerate mind.

In the first place, we now see the true reason why the Gospel has been hitherto confined to so small a portion of the globe. It was committed to men who have not yet, as a body, been faithful to their trust. And why it was so committed, we have already remarked upon. Dr. George Benson makes a brief observation which ought to sound in the ear of Christendom like a peal of thunder: "It is entirely owing to the faults of mankind that the Gospel has not continued since its commencement to spread all over the world!"

Secondly. The glory of the Gospel being chiefly of a moral and Divine nature, God's own people, who alone have a spiritual discernment, are the only persons who can duly admire it; and from them, of course, are we to expect the best and

most vigorous attempts to spread its lustre to the ends of the earth. Are those, then, excusable who from their present darkness cannot see this glory? O no! do not thus deceive yourselves. Such is the magnitude and importance of the subject, that you are bound to enter on sincere examination of it; an examination this, which will necessarily lead you through the whole process of experience. A boy at school is not to be corrected because he does not understand all the depths of art and science, but because he does not rightly apply his mind to these subjects. Begin immediately. "Bring forth works meet for repentance;" and let your countenance, your good wishes, and your contributions in behalf of the missions, now be ranked in the number.

A third consideration is most serious. What an awful responsibility lies on the Christian world respecting the salvation of others! The work is great and arduous in itself, involving a variety of personal and relative duties; but its object is momentous in the extreme. There is a sense, consistent with the Divine perfections, and the moral freedom of mankind, in which the salvation or damnation of others depends on us, who are entrusted with the Gospel. The Christian world in general has been blamable for centuries in omitting to attempt the conversion of the Heathen nations. Before any one says, "Well, it was not my fault," let us reflect. A vast evil has existed some where. It has distributed itself nearly through the whole mass of Christians, on which account each is apt to except himself. But this is a delusion. All sin must be detected, and God will find means to unravel the mystery which hangs upon public sins with regard to those who are guilty. Let us redeem the time while we may, not only by repentance, but also, by instant and unabating zeal for the salvation of our fellow men.

In the last place: With what perfect confidence and spirit ought we to engage in missionary affairs! We may proceed on the fullest conviction, animated by the presence, the help, the approbation of Almighty God, and with a view of the noblest prospects. The Gospel which we propose to send to all the world is no "cunningly-devised fable, but a sure word of prophecy, to which" both ourselves and the Heathen should "do well to take heed." It is the gift of God; and what he gives to us we may boldly give to others. In a word, it is "glorious," and consequently it must be a glorious work to illuminate the world with it. Amen.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE ADORED

IN

THE LAMENTED DEATH

OF

HER LATE ROYAL HIGHNESS

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE AUGUSTA:

OR

THE SUBSTANCE OF A DISCOURSE

ON THAT SUBJECT,

DELIVERED IN

WESLEY-CHAPEL, MEADOW-LANE, LEEDS,

ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH, 1817,

THE DAY APPOINTED FOR THE FUNERAL OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS.

"With equal force, pale Death, or soon, or late,
Knocks at the cottage and the palace gate."

CREECH'S H[illegible]

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Discourse had been delivered upwards of a week before the author indulged the idea of its publication, which is the reason why it has not made an earlier appearance.

Having scarcely had a single note to assist him in the recollection of it, he has been obliged to re-construct it, with improvements, he trusts, still preserving the drift of the whole, as it was originally spoken.

He has endeavoured to associate the present mournful subject with the most important and impressive considerations, hoping to give it some permanency in the hearts and consciences of those who may be pleased to peruse the Discourse.

Others have dwelt upon this solemn occasion in a different, but not opposite, light. He respects their choice, their talents, and their spirit; and hopes they will allow him, without censure, to follow in their train, as an humble auxiliary, in the cause of improving the present painful dispensation.

He begs the indulgence of the public to a hasty composition. Nothing but the paramount importance of the topics he has introduced could encourage him to look for some success in this attempt.

LEEDS,
December 5th, 1817.

I HAVE read your sermon on the death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales with much satisfaction; and certainly think it one among the very best Discourses which I have had the opportunity of perusing on that melancholy subject. It does you credit; and is honourable to the body of which you are a member.

REV. JABEZ BUNTING, D.D.

SERMON III.

Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: To whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.—1 Timothy vi. 15, 16.

The object of St. Paul, in the animated charge from which these words are taken, was to stimulate young Timothy to a right performance of his high and arduous duties as a minister of Jesus Christ. And it must be confessed, that a motive of more energy could not be directed to the heart and conscience of any intelligent and responsible being, (for the motive is intended equally to strike us all,) than what is felt in that most impressive sense of the majesty of our Divine Master and Judge, which the apostle intends to convey in this sublime representation. Language could not, probably, exhibit, in the same narrow limits, a more correct, a more splendid and forcible picture, still comparatively but a shade, of Him, who is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible." And could we, in the full blaze and effect of this awful glory, "set God always before us," we should not, durst not, sin against him.

The text circumstantially asserts the providence of God; its supremacy, its immensity, its goodness, its grandeur. "He is the only Potentate," that is, the only Being in the universe who is properly and independently possessed of power, and from whom all kings hold their tenure of authority and might. How clearly, then, are all the subjects of earthly sovereigns sustained and ruled by him! He is "the blessed Potentate;" his power is perfect purity and goodness, in omnipotent operation. A contrary idea of the Divine power would be the most horrible that could possibly afflict the mind. "He only hath immortality;" hath no beginning, for he never received his power, it is his own; nor can he have an end, for none can take it from him: He is, therefore, the immutable God. And O, what splendours are

thrown around this tremendous and adorable Agent! "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." Perhaps, as some have grandly conjectured, the vision of God in heaven, promised to "the pure in heart," shall consist entirely of that light in which the Deity himself resides; as our vision of a man consists in the perception of his animated person, while we never can behold the interior soul which produces all the touching effects of sounds and sights. The apostle adds, "Amen," to verify the astonishing display of the text, and to avow the obligation and propriety of ascribing to God alone "honour and power everlasting."

We are this day called to the melancholy duty of contemplating Divine Providence in its afflictive aspects, and principally in an instance the most painful to a British mind; an instance, the very mention of which, without attempt at description, constitutes the most resistless appeal to the sensibilities of nature, and holds the soul suspended in all the sublimity of grief. This instance is the unexpected and severe death of the illustrious, and most virtuous, the late Princess Charlotte Augusta, the heir apparent to the British throne, whose remains are this day to be consigned to the solemn grave. This sorrowful event has penetrated every family, every heart, every feeling of the empire. Yet, while our grief must be expressed, it ought also to be subdued and sanctified by Christian considerations and exercises of devotion.

Perhaps, of all topics connected with this great national affliction, that Divine Providence, in the train of whose events it is so sadly conspicuous, will be found to shed upon it the most consolatory light. But before we descend particularly to the event itself, and attempt to deduce from it some appropriate reflections, it may be necessary to provide ourselves with a few guiding principles and views, by touching on the subject of Providence in general.

I. "Providence" is a term of frequent use in the religious world. It is, however, not uncommonly misunderstood, or perhaps pronounced without any clear and definite sense attached to it. And as the subject which it designates is unquestionably of the highest importance, it is obvious no pains should be spared to obtain a right conception of the name, lest we err as to the thing.

The word means equally "provision" or supply, and "prevision" or foresight. These two meanings are necessarily com-

bined in "Providence;" for as it is impossible to provide without foresight, so foresight without provision would be entirely unavailing. Providence may, therefore, be said to consist of three things,—a right knowledge of the universe as to its properties, defects, and uses; a will to amend and regulate according to this knowledge; and a power to perform these purposes of the will. These three things are mutually essential to each other. Remove any one, and the other two are useless. Knowledge and will without power, or power and knowledge without will, would be totally inefficient; and will and power without knowledge might be injurious and destructive. Hence the word "Providence," both in the sacred and Roman languages, is often used in a sense remarkably comprehensive, as signifying the foresight of what is requisite to be done, and the proper order of its accomplishment. It is also understood to imply "vision" by an Intelligence seated far above inferior beings, who overlooks them all, as from the summit of the universe.* With regard to might and energy, it is observable, that the Egyptian mystic-writing represented Providence by a wakeful eye on the point of a sceptre, and by the image of a hand with an eye in the palm, teaching that prescience and wisdom, represented by the eye, ought to be supported by power, pictured by the hand and sceptre.

These meanings all concur in the providence of God, to "whom all things are naked and open," whose will is love, and who has been announced to his subjects in this impressive proclamation,—"The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

How admirably and how amply has he provided for the accomplishment of his designs! With what wonderful provision has he distinguished man, the lord of the creation, in giving him an existence, not only consistent with itself in the essential powers of its constitution, but of great original dignity, and capable of the truest happiness; in placing him on that scene of the world which is perfectly adapted to unfold and raise these powers with unlimited improvement; and, above all, in providing him with laws and revelations, with succours and interpositions, to forward that improvement in the most rapid and delightful manner!

Of these provisions Christianity incomparably excels all the rest. It is a system of itself, distinct from that of nature, but

* See Boëtius, "Consolation," B. 5.

harmonizes with it, and comes not merely as an addition; it is designed to redeem, to pervade, to correct, to elevate, and to bless the whole. To Christianity nature owes, not only the continuance of its being, by the remission of human guilt, but all its imaginable importance. Without Christianity, the soul of man, with all its natural possessions, would be "wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked:" With this immense gift, he is raised to the proper use, and most perfect enjoyment, of all his powers, and all his possessions. Jesus Christ is "the light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world." In all things he deserves the pre-eminence. Whatever may be said in celebration of nature's glory will much more forcibly apply to nature's Divine Restorer. He is another Sun, risen on mid-day; and the entire agency of Providence flows directly through him.

The foresight of God is equally conspicuous. We see it in the human body, which, during infancy, exhibits marks of provision, not for present, but subsequent, necessities. We see it in certain human events, which, at the time of their occurrence, do not produce any proportionable benefit, but which attain their capital design at a very distant period from that of their commencement. We see it in the redemption of Christ, who is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

The whole scheme, indeed, of this Providence is eternal. It is to us the actual developement of such plans and counsels, as never could be absent from the mind of God, because he never received them, never could acquire them. He sees all future in the present, not by some imaginable sweep of his mind, but in a moment, and by something, his own peculiar and unalienable property, analogous to what we mean by a glance, or by intuition. No chances unforeseen can arise to blast his measures, and surprise him unprovided. All his estimates are just and perfect; nor can he possibly be deceived. And as to us eternal Providence can only be made known in parts, and by successive discoveries; eternity to come, and not temporal revolutions, (for heaven and hell are parts of the grand system,) can clearly expound its nature, point out its symmetry, unfold its beauty, and draw forth all its advantages.

The Providence of which we speak is most eminently Divine, not only because it originates in the mind of God, but because it displays his universal and, in a proper sense, his exclusive opera-

tion. He is not a mere spectator of a passing scene; he is himself an actor, and actuates the whole, supporting, directing, and assisting all his creatures. We behold the gliding of a river, or the motion of a cloud, but have no influence on either. God impresses every thing with his own immediate energy. As to the administrations of his grace, he hath himself "shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

All things are full of God. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." This flows from the view we have taken of him as "the only Potentate." The energy that created continues to preserve, and all the powers of nature operate by the power of God. Her "laws," so called, are only different modes by which he works. What are gravity, electricity, or the action of chemistry, but emanations of his power? Not intelligences, separate and distinct from him, self-moving, self-directing, self-efficient. If this were not so, it would argue independence in the creature.

Nor does this view of things make God the author of the abuses of his power, which are practised by sinful men. For, though he alone gives existence to the steel of the murderer, and nerve to the arm by which it is wielded, the moral evil is confined to the vitiated choice and purpose of the assassin. The objection, if it had any force, would lie equally against the notion, of all our powers being entirely and properly our own, when once received from God, but liable to abuse.

The view we have given of God's immediate working through all nature, has, at least, the authority of many of our ablest writers on this subject. It is also recommended by its remarkable simplicity. Above all, it appeared entirely scriptural, as the inspired writers uniformly ascribe nature and her effects to God alone, and not to laws distinct from his own immediate operation: Instance, the sixty-fifth Psalm, where God is celebrated as He "which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power: Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people," &c. Lastly: It is of all theories the most devotional, the most delightful, presenting to the eye of such as live by faith, and not by sight, an universe of life, and love, and glory.

* See Dr. Samuel Clarke's "Letters" to the celebrated Leibnitz, and Mr. Professor Stewart's "Outline of Moral Philosophy."

It follows from what has just been said, that the providence of God is strictly universal. For, as nothing can exist or act without his power, which power implies his presence; and as all his operations are subordinate to goodness, even justice and wisdom being but instrumental to the grand design of love; so Providence must imply a benevolent care of the whole creation, to the meanest and most minute parts. Indeed, if it were beneath the majesty of God to care for his creatures, it would have been equally beneath him to create them; the reason that gave them birth is of force to preserve and bless them. "A sparrow cannot fall to the ground without your heavenly Father's notice." "Your hairs are all numbered." "The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings."

Providence, it must also be observed, is conducted with perfect justice. God's judgments are all righteous; for, the moral power of Deity must be as great as the natural; and He who is the source of all such power to his intelligent creatures must be infinitely above all temptation to depart from rectitude. Hence the wisdom of God has produced a fitness and proportion between his servants and their work: As our day is, so is our strength. We are ruled and judged according to those laws which are proper to our being and circumstances; nor can he possibly deal with his creatures as if they were at all differently constructed and placed from what they really are. This consideration is satisfactory in the highest degree, to thinking and devout minds, and that in all his dispensations, even those which are most painful and mysterious. "He is a rock, his work is perfect: For all his ways are judgment: A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

The position of the text, which asserts a supreme and independent power, is the fruitful seed of many noble and delightful truths. We shall only mention one more, on the present occasion: It is this, that Providence is free and unconstrained. A Being from whose power all other beings received their existence, could not possibly be determined by any cause separate from, and independent of, himself, to put into effect the vast idea of his Providence; for no such cause existed. Consequently, to create, to bless, or to redeem the world, could only originate in the mind of God, and be the free, spontaneous, gracious fruit of infinite love. God's providence is, therefore, as

much the effect of his love as the gift of Christ himself; (for this gift is but a part of the providential scheme;) and, though some particular manifestations of that Providence may seem to be severe, yet as, with relation to the entire system, they are "holy, just, and good," they must still be considered as streams of love, because the system, as a whole, of which they form essential branches, is one vast emanation of love. It is thus that, in a comprehensive, but proper, sense, it may be said that "God is love," even in the administrations of his wrathful indignation. In the light of this most important and sublime truth, it appears, that God is constantly, and in all his ways, afflictive as well as pleasant, minute as well as mighty, promoting the highest happiness of the universe. How ought this to excite our admiration, our entire acquiescence in his afflictive appointments, and our rapturous acknowledgments of his unfathomable love!

II. We have now approached, by proper steps, it is hoped, and in the light and spirit of our most holy religion, to the right understanding and use of the melancholy event which we all now deeply mourn.

This subject, which at present engages universal attention, will be differently treated, according to the prevailing genius and habits of individuals. The statesman will be confounded. The poet will express his awakened sensibilities in the wide and solemn range of a mournful imagination; for, this theme needs not, like some species of poetical writing, the character of fable, acquired by distance of time, as if it could not affect without an air of awful mystery and romance; its own deep and touching interests, its own immediate bearings, connexions, and consequences are sufficiently great and penetrating to the mind of genius and of virtue. And, perhaps, also, a more exquisite concentration of varied and significant interests was never furnished to the pencil of an artist, than the dying minute of our lovely and lamented princess; surrounded by unavailing, but most anxious, assistants of decaying life; a sorrowful smile of pious resignation to "the will of God," upon her altered cheek; her eye, full of love still "stronger than death," fixed on the husband of her heart, who, while he held her lifeless hand, in unimaginable agony, saw her—and, with her, his own fond hopes, and those of a great nation—expire.

The weeping sympathies of many tender and affectionate husbands, fathers, mothers, relatives, and friends, will long con-

tinue to embue the mind, at the remembrance of this severe event; and the sad story will long be told and heard, (for it touches the nature of man through all his species,) while stealing sighs and tears will also tell, how honourable is the memory of Claremont's faithful loves, and virtues, and sufferings.

The Christian will, however, above all other characters, view this subject through the only certain and most important medium of contemplation—that of revealed religion. His reflections will be most just; his sentiments, pure, consistent, impressive, and subdued; his consolations, effectual, rich, and permanent. He alone can see the subject in its genuine character, in its most important and extensive relations. He alone can deduce and improve those sublime lessons of wisdom and of piety which are taught with such awful effect by this tremendous affliction.

Let us, then, religiously contemplate the event itself. Indeed, no occurrence of human life could require to be more carefully, more solemnly, considered.

In the first place, it becomes us to view it as an act of God. This follows from the principles we have advanced on the subject of God's universal agency and government. For though he partly rules the world by means of human instruments, possessed of moral freedom, still these instruments, it is acknowledged, are not free in all their actions; and as to those in which they are unquestionably free, it is evident that many of them reach, in their effects, beyond the purpose of the actors. How many events, both good and evil, occur through mistake or accident, without the will or intention of any human being! Are such events, like strays in the fields, supposed to belong to no one? Shall we say that such effects have no intelligent cause? We might, with equal propriety, assert they have no natural cause, unless we could demonstrate, against the principles already stated, that God is not the author of nature's operations, or that he acts without design.

Or shall we still attribute them to the instrumental cause, working without intention as to such particular consequences? There can be no effect without some intelligent cause. We never say a building is the act of a trowel; yet we know it must be the work of some designing agent who makes use of that instrument. The universe is full of mind. Every motion in the kingdom of nature, whether of clouds, or trees, or planets;

as well as every motion, in particular, of animated nature; is the effect of intelligent design and operation. "Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" "I the Lord create evil." Nothing comes to pass without his appointment or permission; and when any thing is, according to man's language, merely permitted, the design of God in the permission is still positive, but "holy, just, and good."

If this reasoning be just, what shall we say of events which human power could not avert, which have occurred, notwithstanding all the anxious design, all the skill, and all the art of man to the contrary? Such precisely was the case with the sad event we now deplore,—the result of the uncontrollable will of Jehovah. And the argument is the same, if we suppose the absence of all skill, and all art; for if God had so designed, he could, without a miracle, have diverted the insufficient agency into another channel, and turned some competent ability toward the object which has so lamentably failed.

And that God does really interfere to produce events which otherwise would not occur at all, we have every reason to believe, from the magnitude of the consequences which sometimes attend them. To illustrate this conclusion, it may be proper just to mention two events of our history, remarkable at once for their importance, and for the delicacy and contingency of the hinges on which they turned.

The first is the destruction of king Richard III. at the battle of Bosworth Field. This seemed to depend on several accidental causes, such as the dazzling of the sun in the face of Richard's army, but chiefly on the determination of Sir William Stanley, who stood aloof at the commencement of the combat, watching an opportunity to join the strongest party. But even this determination was effected by another circumstance, distinct from the main action.

While Richard with his officers was leading on the van, a scout came upon the full run and informed him, that Richmond was posted behind the hill with a slender attendance. Richard, fired at the news, grasped his spear, and fixing it in the rest, exclaimed, "Let all true knights attend me, and I will soon put an end to the quarrel." He instantly put spurs to his horse, and galloped full on Richmond. Here he performed wonders, and had almost gained the day by the death of his antagonist. Sir William Stanley, who witnessed the affair, now found his oppor-

tunity, and quickly closing in with three thousand men, soon overpowered the king, who was slain in the contest.

From the time when Richard left the van of his army till he fell, could not be more than fifteen minutes, but they were some of the most remarkable minutes of which we ever read. They for ever closed the bleeding wounds of the houses of York and Lancaster. They extinguished the ancient and heroic line of Plantagenet. They opened the door for light, knowledge, and letters. They were the dawn of the arts. They promoted a natural and lasting union between England and Scotland, by the marriage of the conqueror's daughter with a Scottish king. The United Kingdom was taught, by these fifteen minutes, to increase in commerce, in riches, in civilization, in power, and soon to rise the arbitress of Europe.* And who will venture to assert, that God Almighty did not, by the secret but certain movements of his providential agency, expressly and designedly effect these blessed consequences?

The other instance is one that exhibits the most valuable effects arising from the preservation of a royal life.

Our historians inform us, that the bloody Mary had designed the death of the princess Elizabeth, afterwards queen of England, but was dissuaded from it by her husband Philip, king of Spain. This is the more remarkable, as he was a monster of cruelty, and put his own son to death because he was mercifully inclined towards the Protestants. The reason of his favour towards Elizabeth was clearly this: Fearing Mary should die childless, he anticipated, in the case of Elizabeth's removal, that the crown would fall to Mary queen of Scots, who, being inseparably leagued with France, was likely in this case to produce an union too powerful for Spain. Now, who can help perceiving that if God had not intended Elizabeth to reign, he could easily have diverted the influence of Philip's motive, or have removed him from the world? We are led again to this conclusion by the magnitude of consequences. But on the happy reign of Elizabeth it is not necessary here to dwell.

Indeed, all our prayers to God proceed expressly on the supposition of his occasional interferences in favour of his people; and though a pre-established order of things, of which order prayers themselves are said to be a part, has been advanced by

* See Hutton's "Bosworth Field," p. 124; whose words, in part, are used above.

some philosophers to elucidate the difficulty, who does not see that this opinion brings the doctrine of fatality upon us with a vengeance?

These observations are advanced to illustrate the position, that our present griefs are caused by an act of God; not from any fear that this truth will be denied, but in order to produce the strongest possible conviction; as in proportion to our rational ideas, and deep impressions, on this subject, will be the delightful confidence of the mind in the God of all providence.

We are now to consider the event in question as a national calamity. This does not contradict the opinion just stated, that it is the act of a wise and gracious God, because his wisdom and grace are never more illustrated than by means of calamity. Should any one merely view it as a domestic affliction, we ask, Why, then, this national regret and mourning? It is certainly a most severe stroke, as seen in this contracted light; but by no means peculiar or uncommon. Besides, on the principle which is brought to vindicate this narrow view, I will undertake to prove, that it does not even bear the character of a domestic affliction, and that, in consequence of the wisdom and corrective loving-kindness of God in this event, in reference to the royal family privately considered, we ought not to mourn, but to be glad and rejoice.

Do we not sorrow, though in hope, for the death of our friends? and more for an adult, than for a child? for the father of a family, than for an unmarried individual? for a general, than for a private soldier? for a king, than for a subject? Did not all Israel mourn the death of their kings? Did not England lament the loss of the Black Prince, the hopeful son of Edward III? of that incomparable sovereign and saint, king Edward VI? of young prince Henry, the promising heir of James I? and of George II. whose sudden and unexpected removal struck the kingdom with most painful surprise?

That the Judge of all the earth will do right, we cannot doubt; but the sinful character of Britain will admit of very afflictive administrations of his righteousness; and, whatever may be the distant consequences of the late unhappy event, its more immediate effects, for aught we can assure ourselves to the contrary, may be of the saddest importance. In a frequent

change of sovereigns, which is likely to ensue, it is not extremely probable that all of them will be emulous to act upon the high political, constitutional, and most virtuous character of our present venerable but afflicted king. The destruction, successively, of the four great monarchies of Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome, we now perceive, at this distance of time, to have produced the happiest general advantages; yet those revolutions were, during their progress, very dreadful calamities. However, therefore, we may feel satisfied, as to the grand result of things, we ought, when God threatens, tremblingly to feel, and evade our own individual danger, and that of our children to the third and fourth generation.

Still it is consistent to view the event we now deplore as the means of much good. Indeed, we know not whether those unhappy consequences which we have reason to fear, will ever occur. If God has interfered to afflict us, he may also interpose to relieve us, and "heal the bones which he has broken." We have seen that while he rules over all, with a benevolence and care the most comprehensive and complete, he sometimes works by special reaches of his power. He may yet produce an outward effect to supply the immense loss we now sustain, and find an occupant for the British throne, who shall astonish and delight mankind by his endowments, his virtues, and the power of his influence. Let us, then, possess our souls in patience, till the day dawn, and the day-star of joy arise in our land.

If, however, we should not be so happy as to realize this charming hope, a blessed inward effect, so to speak, may yet be produced in the mind of God respecting us. He may be appeased, he may smile, he may show his love, and sustain us in our privations by his grace and Holy Spirit. The presence and approval of so great and good a Being would sanctify and cheer the deepest natural distress. This tolerable, this blessed state of things is, at all events, within our reach. By penitence, by faith and prayer, we may defy the approach of real misery, and enjoy all the essential happiness of man, in every possible situation.

Let us also consider, that every trial, whether national or domestic, is designed to act as a means of mental, of moral, and of religious education. In this view, affliction is one of the noblest expedients of the providential plan. It distils the

best spirit and elixir of the mind. It makes the soul spring all her powers, and astonish herself with a consciousness of the treasures she contains. A Nelson and a Wellington would never have been sensible of the strength and reach of their own capacity, and we should never have admired it and reaped its advantages, but for the dreadful situations they have braved and surmounted. Our misfortunes, then, so called, may be made the most fortunate circumstances of our life. They may enrich us for ever with the opulence which Heaven supplies. Health, and wealth, and all that mortality can give, are but extrinsic to the soul. They form no part of her own proper furniture. She is herself a far nobler world; and all the matter in the universe is but an atom to her, if once she plume herself for eternity, and seek her refuge and her rest in God.

It is obvious to remark, that the late painful event may be the occasion of much immediate good to the souls of our dear countrymen; and this, particularly, by means of the character of our late incomparable princess, now brought forward fully to the view of the nation, and operating through the medium of that deep and solemn feeling by which the public mind is moved. Her name is endeared to us by our admiration of that character, by our conviction that she fills a throne in heaven, and by the sad sense of our loss at her untimely departure. Surely this endearment gives her virtues and example a paramount authority.

Our sorrows bring a soothing with them, which fixes our enamoured spirits on the bright pattern she has left us, and inclines us to emulate her imitable excellencies. The whole occasion is pervaded by uncommon solemnity, but no horrid image, no imp of hell, intrudes upon the heavenly scene, to divert our attention from that angel of our love and delight, whom our eye sorrowingly follows to the confines of blessedness. We are not afraid with any great amazement, or distracted by dread. We feel that we are tranquil, and can listen, in sweet abstraction from the din of mortality, to that voice which lately, on earth, gave the very music of virtue to all within its sound, but which now from heaven speaks, with sufficient distinction, and seraphical effect, the noblest lessons of religion and virtue, to millions left imprisoned in this sublunary world. That voice says, "Follow me;" and where is the Briton who will rebelliously object to obey the command of such a voice?

I wish it were in my power to draw the character of our admirable but departed princess. For this, however, I have neither the materials nor the talents. It will, no doubt, be done by many persons competent to finish that nice and important task. Still we are not entire strangers to her worth. We have heard her fame. We have seen her move, though at a distance, not in the circumstantial pomp of royalty, and of fashion, but in all the real majesty of unpretending, benevolent, and active virtue and piety.

Of the character of this princess, as to the solid mental endowments ascribed to her; the bent she took by education and the wisdom of her own will, preparatory to her future rank; and the high qualities she possessed for the stately and most beneficial occupation of a throne; we, now present, are not the proper judges. We may conclude, however, that a queen, thus modelled and inspired, would have driven from her court the bats and owls of dark iniquity, by the brightness of her rising, and spread a noon-day lustre of goodness and of piety through both hemispheres of her dominions.

But the essential virtues, the religious acquisitions, and great practical duties of the human being, which shone in her, defined and illuminated by the light of her exalted rank and destiny, are perfectly level to our imitation. The industry of her whole life, which might put thousands of her inferiors to the blush; her obedience to parents and instructors, though she was possessed of a high-toned natural disposition; her conjugal affection and devotedness; (for, fidelity in this instance, was its lowest character, and unthought-of in the constant rapture of an attached heart;) her anxiety to promote the happiness of all around her, of every British subject, of the whole world; above all, her deep regard for true religion, her piety, her strict observance of the holy sabbath, her attendance on religious ordinances, her uniform practice of secret prayer, her declared desire to live with constant reference to a happy death, and her exclusive dependence, for salvation, on the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, ought, this day, to impress our hearts with the stamp of their own Divine character, and to leave behind them the very principles and spirit which gave them birth and inspiration. We should then experience, in the sorrowing remembrance of her distressing removal, that this national calamity is the occasion of incalculable good, to those who rightly improve

it; and be convinced, that God intended this immediate benefit to arise, as, at least, one subordinate advantage of a case in his Providence, which has an inconceivable range, and which, perhaps, can only give its grand result at some very distant period of time.

III. I had intended to dwell on some reflections, more distinctly arising from the great cause of our present griefs: (for as to Providence in general, the improvement of that subject is too vast to be entered upon at present;) but the discussion having occupied more time than was expected, we shall soon conclude this discourse. I will just mention a few things which naturally struck upon my own mind, without much assistance of speculation or study.

First, then, who can help exclaiming, "O the depth, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" We have seen that the late event must have been designed in wisdom. But, O, what astonishing knowledge of nature and of futurity must be involved in that wisdom! What statesman, what legislator, what philosopher, what philanthropist, could ever have imagined such an expedient for our good, for our correction, or for the beneficial management of public affairs? This knowledge is too mighty for us. It belongs to God alone. Let us be thankful that all saving and essential knowledge is within our grasp. Thus God has admirably suited circumstances even to his creatures. The ponderous animal that browses the earth may find food within the limits of a field, while a bird, that has wings, must collect its supplies from a whole extent of country. The things that are revealed belong to us and to our children; secret things belong to the Lord. But what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.

Again: The event in question strikes us by an awful view of the uncontrollable power and majesty of God. Perhaps, it will be said, that this is much more extensively seen in the affirmations of the text, and the general display of Providence on which we have dwelt. True: But who regards the ordinary manifestations of the Deity? Our little minds are not often touched with a whole. A part must be selected for us. Some principal figure must start from the canvass to arrest our lifeless attention. Before we will turn our eyes to the beautiful spectacle of the heavens, some great eclipse must occur, though this phenomenon implies no extraordinary power of God. Thus the death of our lamented princess strikes us with conviction of what God can

easily effect. Had some foreign enemy invaded Britain, with a view to snatch her from us, a hundred thousand swords would have sprung from their scabbards, to defend the inestimable treasure which, in her, we so lately possessed; and this power would have availed, if God had yielded his assent: But, when Deity interferes, the whole universe must give way.

Once more: It is obvious to remark, that proper thoughts of the late event ought to increase our satisfactions with life, and our submission to death. No warming spirits, no friendship, no love, no enjoyments of mortal existence now thrill the cold, unconscious heart of her on whose account we sorrow. Yet she did rank among the most elevated women in the world. And God hath been pleased to withdraw from her, what he still continues to the meanest maid in the country,—life, and its blessings, both natural and religious. How ought we, then, to value this distinguishing goodness of God towards us! And shall we not patiently submit to the stroke of impartial death, who sways his sceptre over the universal race of man, and spares not the mighty and the noble?

To conclude: This great stroke of the king of terrors leads us to a grand proof of an immortal state. Why this sudden blasting of such blooming hopes, such cultivated intellect, such brilliant virtue, if there be not something answerable to them in another world? The present scene is not proportioned to the nature of man. He is constantly effecting new creations for himself, in the range of that imagination which more particularly rules over what are called "the fine arts;" he is restless with real life; he has thoughts that wander through eternity. Why these boundless properties, liable every moment to be extinguished from this state of mortality, if there be no futurity, no world of infinity, to furnish them with objects, with scope, and immortality to correspond with their nature?

Convinced, then, that there is an Almighty God, a blessed heaven, a dreadful hell, and an eternity of both, to one of which we are rapidly advancing on the wheel of time, let us implore the favour of so great a Being, and cultivate that meetness of a pure heart, in which alone we can be raised to see his face in glory, through the merits and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed Divine and everlasting honours. Amen.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE ILLUSTRATED

IN

THE ORDINATION

OF

POLITICAL GOVERNMENT:

A DISCOURSE,

IN WHICH

THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTLE'S WORDS,

"THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD,"

IS IMPARTIALLY ADJUSTED, AND RELIGIOUSLY IMPROVED:

DELIVERED IN

SANS-STREET CHAPEL, SUNDERLAND,

ON WEDNESDAY, FEB. 16TH, 1820.

THE DAY APPOINTED FOR THE INTERMENT OF

HIS LATE MAJESTY KING GEORGE III.

"AND he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." REV. xix. 16.

"EXAMPLE in a king is all in all;
The statutes of the realm serve less to form
His subjects' manners, than the life he leads."
CLAUD. 4. *Cons. Hon*

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the following Discourse, the original line of thought is preserved; the alterations, however, are considerable. Several things, indeed, are introduced, which could not have been so properly addressed to a promiscuous assembly.

That a large and respectable audience should have had the patience to listen, with attention, to a Discourse of such length, and of a cast so far removed from that of more spiritual and truly more important subjects commonly adduced in preaching, might well excite the surprise and acknowledgments of the author.

To them he gratefully inscribes it, presuming they may still perceive, in its perusal, no design of fomenting political controversy, or of defending a party; but a sincere and constant aim to recommend religious duty.

He might plead for its appearance, as is usual on these occasions, the request of friends whose judgment he respects; yet he freely confesses to have been chiefly swayed by a flattering hope of its usefulness, among such professing Christians as should condescend to read it, particularly those of the Connexion to which he has the honour to belong.

He regrets that time did not admit of a more ripened consideration; as the general subject, though always important, and peculiarly so at present, is but too susceptible of defects, even in the hands of our best writers. The publication has been delayed by circumstances unforeseen, connected with the printing.

Sunderland,
March 27th, 1820.

I thank you for your sermon on the death of the king. Though I am no critic, I can say, as is common, I know what pleases me; and I have perused it with much pleasure. Your main principles are unquestionably irrefragable, if the Scripture be true. And the manner in which you state them, the course of clear and ingenuous argument you pursue, and the lightings-up of a true eloquence which occur, (and in their proper place too,) I much admire.

Rev. Richard Watson.

SERMON IV.

The powers that be are ordained of God.—Romans xiii. 1.

The Providence of God imports the sovereignty, and wisdom, and goodness, with which he rules the visible universe; including, more especially, the volitions, and actions, and events of mankind.

To trace these mighty attributes, as thus impressed upon a living picture of immense extent and grandeur; and, especially, to enliven our discoveries of this subject with proportioned feelings of interest and devotion; is one of the noblest and most delightful employments of our nature. However we may speculate on the natural principles, and secular advantages or disadvantages, of human concerns; and however we may operate, as instruments in the conduct of affairs; it is still our duty, as professing Christians, by the realizing vigour of a true and active faith, to set God always before us.

Nor is there any inconsistency, whether between this pious temper, or those gratifying studies, and the urgent occupations of ordinary life. They may not only run parallel, but mutually assist each other. Even the policy of statesmen can receive no bolder light, no stronger energy, no surer success, than what may be imparted by this adoring recognition of the Governing Supreme.

The consideration, that the Infinite God is a party concerned in the business of life, must communicate to human events a character of greatness and of importance, which, viewed in their own darkling and uncertain light, they could not possibly be supposed to possess.

This truth is illustrated by the precepts which the Heathens themselves have delivered on the poetic art. They enjoin the use of what is called "machinery," or the superintendence of the gods, as essential to the progress and effect of a narrative of

involved and great events; and this, not only, it is asserted, for the purpose of rendering the piece more majestic, and more admirable; but to give the readers a lesson of piety and virtue, and to teach them, that the most brave, and the most wise, can do nothing, and attain to nothing, great and glorious, without the assistance of Heaven. Thus, they profess, the presence of a Deity crowns the whole work, and renders it at once marvellous, and probable, and moral.*

How, then, ought the consciousness of a real and more magnificent superintendence of affairs,—in which we ourselves have an infinite concern, and which is carried on by a God of omnipotence, of justice, of holiness, and of love,—to fix our attention and affect our hearts! And if "a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without our heavenly Father's notice;" surely, a great and pious prince could not be elevated to the throne of the first civilized country in the world, and hold his reign for a long and most eventful period, and drop at last from that important dignity into the grave, without the special guidance and control of God.

It may instruct, it may console us, on the present very solemn and mournful occasion, to prosecute, with a calm and serious mind, these most interesting reflections. And here, the Holy Scriptures will teach us truth, not merely by the beaming of their light, but also, we would hope, by the gentle force of a salutary inspiration, giving birth to those enlarged and pious feelings which ought to mark our contemplations on a theme as affecting as it is sublime.

The important proposition of which our text consists, may be thus extended: If "the powers that be are ordained of God;" then, by the same ordination, and in the same sense, are the kingdoms of this world subjected to government; for each infers the other by a necessary relation. The proposition further implies, that the distinctions of riches, of rank, of education, and of talents, which give immediate birth to the agencies of government, are also regular appointments of a superintending Providence.

Again: The gradations of society, with respect to political power, whatever be the form of government, must terminate in some Supreme Administrator, as nature does not admit of an infinite progression. And this Chief Ruler must be the fountain from which all the streams of power must virtually flow, by

* See "Bossu on the Epic Poem," b. v.

whatever means we may presume that fountain to have received its original supplies; for two sovereign authorities in the same realm are incompatible. And because no individual ruler can govern, by his own personal presence and administration, the whole of the concerns of an empire, it is necessary that others, in subordination to his political will and direction, should assist him in carrying the laws into effect. The text is understood as expressive of this graduated scale of authorities.

The furtherance of religious conviction and feeling, and not political disputation, is our present object. We will, therefore, endeavour to keep within those limits in which, it is hoped, all Christian parties are agreed; and which, we deem, are closely connected, at once, with their duty and happiness; not merely considering them as members of the community, but as placed under circumstances of progressive preparation for that "kingdom which shall never be moved."

Let us now attempt to show, I. In what sense "the powers that be are ordained of God." II. Point out some of the chief moral and religious advantages connected with this ordination, and with the distinctions of society which give immediate rise to government, and which are, in turn, supported by it. III. Contemplate the character and reign of His late lamented Majesty King George III. as further illustrating, with great eminence and peculiarity, this view of Divine Providence. And, lastly, improve the whole by some appropriate reflections.

I. THE TEXT EXPLAINED.

It is unquestionably the will of God, that man should live in mutual society; for, this essentially promotes his happiness, and exactly corresponds with his social principles. It follows, that, notwithstanding the corruption of the human being, due provision has been made for the maintenance of social order; because, if his moral defectibility had been such as to render it impossible to devise and apply right principles of government, his very existence must have come to a speedy termination. Indeed, the conquest of this corruption, as far as it strikes at public order and happiness, is one grand object of authoritative government.

Now, we infer, it was His prerogative who designed the end, also to provide the means. This, however, he has not done, directly, in the Holy Scriptures, which furnish no political

maxims, no commands to the world respecting the erection and improvement of states; for the Scriptures were designed as a subsequent measure, in the progress of society, and must, as to grand political purposes, have come too late, numerous communities having previously existed.

The provision, then, of which we speak must be found in the nature and condition of mankind; which shows, that the general workmanship of God was originally so constructed as to produce, by the natural operation of cause and effect, such public institutions; and in such a manner as to admit of his own controlling interference, without destroying the respective natures of the subjects upon which he moves. Thus, partly by the mediation of nature, partly by his own direct impressions, partly in the Christian state of the world, by the recognitions, and sanctions, and counsels of revelation, does God ordain "the powers that be."

He has taught us, by the natural operation of things, to seek our own happiness in the pursuit of true pleasure, and of relief in painful circumstances; for, both pleasure and pain proceed from Him. Thus, we cultivate the earth, because it is profitable so to do; and in this he graciously concurs by his sun and rain. On the other hand, a child grasps some glittering instrument of death, and suffers a bleeding wound, which becomes, in effect, a valuable experiment. Thus, also, the mischievous effects of lawless disorder teach man the absolute necessity of government. He finds his very existence, much more his comfort, as an inhabitant of this world, depends on order. A perfect anarchy cannot exist. It would be the suicide of society, either by means of mutual destructions, or by a dispersion of mankind into innumerable solitudes. It is, then, evident, that God, by teaching this necessity of public laws in the way already explained, has made government as much his own appointed ordinance, as the use of food for our subsistence, without which he has not provided, by any miracle, to preserve life.

It does not follow, that each particular kind of government, or instance of its administration, is ordained of God, or properly receives his approbation. As, in like manner, it would be equally absurd, to say, that every improper mode of using food, that excessive abstinence and intemperance, are all approved of God, and branches of that ordinance. The particular forms of government, whether monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, or mixed,

as in the case of our own unrivalled constitution, whether free or tyrannical, are left to the choice of states themselves, as is generally believed to be the case with church-government; and it is right, that societies should abide by the consequences of their own choice. States will always find their folly to account for their misfortunes. The vengeance of war itself is only the natural and ordained punishment of states, collectively considered, for their acquiescence in so dreadful an evil.

Reason, also, joins issue with necessity in the erection of government. This particularly appears in the formation of those ample associations termed "communities," which are a vast improvement upon the parental and feudal governments that prevail in the early stages of society. Men found, by a rational consideration of their necessities, and capacities for happiness, that something more efficient was wanting for defence and improvement than these inferior establishments could possibly supply. Thus God, through the medium of reason, ordained "the powers that be." *

The fact is this: God is the author of every principle or thing which legitimately bears upon order and public good. He it is who gives the social principle, and who inspires the fear that seeks for protection. It is, also, his appointment, that no one man should possess within himself what is sufficient for him, even the rich being essentially dependent on the poor; which leads to associations mutually advantageous. These circumstances strongly mark the hand and design of God.

The will of God respecting government may also be seen in his management of contingencies. A contingency is the free action of a rational being; an action which may or may not be in perfect consistency with the nature of the agent. It is not a contingency, that fire, when kindled, should burn and shine; but that any one should light up the spark at a given time, is perfectly contingent.

Now, even as to the natural world, it is surely not unreasonable to suppose, that God should occasionally combine and separate the force of its laws, on purpose to give a different season or moment to an event; or even to produce one which would not have resulted from the general laws of nature; and hence, for instance, we pray, that he would bless the use of medicine. In many instances, we allow, that this can be

* See Puffendorf, "Duty of Man," b. ii. c. 6.

effected by the art of man himself. Moral causes are generally influenced by impressions on the mind, by striking the passions, particularly hope and fear. So, one friend, by offering proper considerations to another, can alter his views and purposes, without prejudice to his moral agency; and, certainly, the Father of our spirits can insinuate himself into the soul in as consistent and persuasive a manner.

It will be necessary to illustrate, more at large, this subject of contingencies. When God confounds even the rational schemes of men, causing them to produce the very opposite effect to that which was on their part intended,—as in the decline of Rome, when her ablest statesmen and warriors only hastened her destruction,* contrary to the visible bearing of their most admirable plans, it is easy to perceive what is the purpose of the Divine Mind; for though he concurs in all our actions, merely as natural operations, we being unable to do any thing without his help; still, as to objects, he may differ widely from us, having secret purposes to serve by those actions, of great reach and importance, while we are confined to our own selfish and limited intentions. Thus he concurred in the death of Christ, which was an act of great atrocity on the part of the murderers; and, by this means, agreeably to his own distinct purpose, effected an atonement for the salvation of the world. And, that poison should thus be converted into the most valuable nutriment, and the dreadful evils, which would naturally cause our destruction, be pressed into the service of our highest interests, is a most illustrious demonstration of the Divine skill and power.

This control of human schemes may sometimes, however, include a series of stages; and we are not to suppose that his complacent will is linked to each particular stage, as if it were absolutely good; otherwise, we should infer, that every changing state of things is the best, and ought to be continued: But, when the last effect of the series becomes a settled result, clearly corresponds with God's design of communicating happiness, and is, by general experience and consent, acknowledged to be high on the scale of improvement, we may then presume to say, that this is, so far, the ordinance of Heaven. As instances, we may refer to the Reformation and Revolution.

By this reasoning, we may probably discover, that God not only authorizes government in general, but favours monarchy in

* See Dr. Jackson's Works, vol. ii. p. 253, &c.

particular. Thus monarchy became, at last, the settled government of the Jews, after a succession of other forms. This, indeed, was by the consent of the people, which is one means by which God facilitates the erection of particular governments; and though he gave them a king in his anger, it was not because he had any peculiar objection to monarchy; but because they cast Him off, preferring this new form of government to that glorious theocracy which could not possibly be equalled. In like manner, it is said, "By me kings reign;" not merely implying by permission; for then it might be said, with equal propriety, "By me men work iniquity, and by me devils blaspheme;" but by positive appointment; and Bishop Andrews has remarked, that neither διά in the Greek, nor בי in the Hebrew, will bear the sense of "permission," but fairly and grammatically imports "institution."

As the worlds were made by him, so, in the same sense, thinks this excellent prelate, were kings appointed by him; and, as he conceives, by means of a Divine word or ordinance; for it is said, "He called them gods to whom the word of God came." The will of his love is also judged to have accompanied his supreme command. "Because God loved Israel, did he set king Solomon over them." And we, of all people in the universe, can confidently attest, how great and invaluable a blessing, and how unequivocal a mark of God's love it is, to enjoy, for a long period of time, the reign of a good and pious king; and, should we reason from the effect to the cause, we should say, it was the express will and appointment of Heaven.

This appointment of kings, as such, must not, however, be imagined as precisely of the same kind with the ordination of public order, considered absolutely, and as universally instituted. The latter must be wherever human society is found; the existence of the former rests on contingent circumstances; and by circumstances only, duly weighed and examined, can we collect the Divine approbation of monarchy in preference to other forms, or of any one particular sovereign rather than of others. What those circumstances are, will appear in the sequel.

By what contingencies the Restoration was effected, after monarchy had received a wound, which appeared to be its death-blow, in England, is well known. But those contingencies which led, under God, to the important revolution of 1688, are too striking to be passed in silence. James publicly professed the

Romish faith, with a view to its propagation throughout his dominions. God concurred with him in this action, but with quite another view; namely, the prevention of the very scheme which James expected it would serve; for the people became indignant at the attempt, and an overwhelming re-action of the country was the consequence. The army deserted him, without any apparent cause, contrary to the usual promptitude, and sense of honour, with which such men usually fly to defend a throne. James himself, though an excellent soldier in his youth, now, as by some strange infatuation, lost all his former courage, and forsook a throne and a kingdom which he fully possessed the means of retaining, at least for some considerable time.

The immediate consequences were most happy. A more liberal prince appeared; the royal prerogative was defined; the constitution settled and improved; and the protestant succession secured by a law of the land. One of the grandest events to which it led was the elevation of the Brunswick family to the British throne. This was effected by an Act of Settlement, with respect to which, the management of contingencies was strikingly exemplified, as that most important Act was passed by a majority of only four voices! Such, in the arrangements of Providence, are the mighty consequences of small and trivial circumstances; resembling a few plain and ordinary principles, in certain branches of science, which produce, in their results, the most ravishing conclusions, and thus demonstrate the prodigious genius and wisdom of the inventor.

But our doctrine of contingencies, did time allow of discussion, would still more strikingly illustrate the appointment of God in the accession to the throne, and the lengthened reign, of our late venerable king. His occasional preservation, not only from foreign but domestic foes; and his life being continued, during a period of years after he had lost his mental health, (for though dead to himself, he was still alive to the country in the operation of his principles and authority,) seem to mark the guiding finger of God in our behalf; and to sanction the sentiment of the text, as applied, beyond its proper signification, to the existing power in particular, as ordained of God; which ordination ought to excite the deepest interest, beyond that which even the value of the appointment itself could produce, as a gift is sometimes much enhanced by the hand of the giver.

After all that we have advanced, it may still, perhaps, be said,

that the social compact alone gives authority to kings and governments. If by this "compact" is meant, direct agreement among all the parties, no such compact ever existed in this world, or can possibly exist; as the whole inhabitants of an empire cannot actually assemble to consult on so important an affair; and the best-regulated governments reject a vast proportion of the people from having any voice whatever in public affairs; as, for instance, women, and persons not arrived at age. But, if the compact merely imply the tacit consent of the people, (which, no doubt, in a free country, is necessary to sanction a government,) then it follows, that any supreme governor, for instance, cannot receive his authority from this kind of consent, because it comes too late, and supposes the previous induction of the governor into his office. And this corresponds with facts, in general, as any one may perceive who candidly examines into the origin of governments.

But, supposing the fact, that men were all to meet to fix upon their governors; could, for instance, the power of life and death be communicated by those who have, on no account, the same power over their own life? Besides, it is one thing to institute a power, and another to elect a person for its administration.* The mayor of a town is a case to explain this. He is, indeed, appointed by certain persons to fill his office; yet his power to act comes, not from them, but from the charter of the king. Thus if a sovereign should actually receive the personal sanction of a whole nation, still his authority would come from God. We may dispose of our organs of vision as we please, for the reception or rejection of the light; still the power of perceiving it, is solely the ordinance of God.

We confess, however, that, supposing the doctrine which we have hitherto advanced to be the doctrine of truth and of revelation, a very serious difficulty remains to be conquered. And it is this: Is every existing ruler, and each particular government, in such sense ordained of God as to mark an opposing force with the character of rebellion? And, if not, what is the proper conduct to be adopted by the people, in cases which are evidently tyrannical and oppressive? We will attempt to meet this question promptly and fairly.

Here permit me to premise, that, supposing the difficulty to

* See Bishop Sanderson, "Of the Conscience," Prelection 7th.

remain unsolved, or, indeed, to be incapable of a satisfactory solution, still this would not invalidate the foregoing principles, which we think we have sufficiently established. But a virtuous mind will, probably, be soon put to rest upon this point.

We observe, then, in the first place, that a very material difference exists between an usurpation and a tyranny. The former may not affect te nature of government. Richard III. administered the laws with admirable justice. And when there is none to compete with the usurper, then the government regularly falls into his hands, as possession is always favourable to the possessor. Thus, by tract of time, and by consent of the people, either more explicitly or tacitly expressed, the very form itself of government becomes a lawful one. Plato says, "He who lives amongst us consents to our laws." Our text refers to the execrable Nero. And our Lord himself submitted to the reigning authorities; for, though originally an usurpation, they were now become lawful. About a century preceding, Julius Cæsar forcibly assumed the purple; but the senate, by successive acts, and the people, by consent, sufficiently recognised the government as their own. In the next place, with regard to a tyranny in particular, we observe, that, no doubt, God permits it as a punishment for national guilt; and, therefore, one of the best means of its removal is national repentance, which removal he may sometimes accomplish by peaceable and unexpected means, as in the case of James II.

We observe, again, that changes are usually effected by the aristocracy, who are always more capable of the work than large numbers of the populace; and, therefore, it is rational to confide in their endeavours. Changes belong to the art of governing, which lies beyond the talents and business of the people. We may, indeed, choose representatives to join the aristocracy in the work; still, it is properly the work of these parties alone, in their deliberative capacity.

We do not understand the art of a physician; we can only choose a person to employ it in our behalf; the art itself is above us. And so it is with the science of politics. It is an uncertain and tumultuous sea, in which it is difficult for the ablest men to swim. We are, therefore, absolutely obliged to be governed, not by our own understanding, but by that of others. And this is clearly the will of God; for, it is the law of nature, teaching us obedience through the medium of neces-

sity. The entire public business of the world is done by a comparative few. And it must be so. It cannot possibly be otherwise. This absolutely extends down to meetings on parish affairs: A few direct and operate, the others only give consent.

The people have, indeed, the unquestionable right of constitutional appeal. The press has created a new power in politics, of which the ancients knew but little; I mean, the voice of society. And any government that systematically despises this power, when legitimately, and fully, and perseveringly expressed, (for, doubtless, there is a good and proper sense in which this power, also, is "ordained of God,") will infallibly have reason to repent its impolicy. But no people have any right of forcible opposition, of taking the law into their own hands. The man who does this resists God by resisting the power. He, in effect, refuses to be governed at all; because his conduct, if copied by all the others, would lead to universal anarchy; for, we have already seen, that a whole people, as such, can neither actually govern, nor, in fact, appoint a governor. He, therefore, who resists, strikes at the law of nature, and the welfare of his country. Commands against God's law and our consciences we must refuse to obey and suffer, leaving ourselves in the hands of the Judge of all the earth, who himself will vindicate our right. But, as private citizens, we must go no farther.

For this we have the example of the first Christians, during three whole centuries of the purest state of the church, who endured with magnanimity the most cruel tyrannies and oppressions, without betraying the smallest wish to rebel against the monsters that distressed them. I do not mean to say, that they did not assert their innocence, did not appeal to justice, did not reprove their judges; but, that they did not resist by force, did not degrade the authorities, did not enter into coalitions for overturning the existing powers.

It has frequently been said, "They did not resist, merely because they could not."* To this we reply, It is very unargumentative, in a matter of such importance, to reason from a negative supposition to great practical consequences, as if the negation were amply demonstrated. If such were the truth

* Tertullian, in his *Apology*, cap. 37, informs us, that in many instances the Christians were so numerous as to have been able to overthrow the empire, if so disposed.

respecting them, it would, no doubt, have been transmitted to us, either in their writings, or by some other circumstances. But historic fact is evidently against the supposition. The army of the apostate Julian was almost entirely Christians; for, at his death, when they made choice of Jovinian as emperor, and he refused, because the empire was Pagan, and he himself a Christian, they exclaimed with one voice, "And we also are Christians!" a proof that they had formerly obeyed, not for want of power, but, as Augustine writes concerning them,* "because they would be subject to Julian their temporal lord, for his sake who was their eternal Lord and Master." If any one denounces them as dastardly slaves, it would not be difficult to produce, in their actual heroism, a proof of the contrary. But to such kind of objectors I have nothing to say, as I now address myself to men who not only believe the truth of Christianity, but are willing to imbibe its peaceable and gentle spirit.

It may possibly be said, that Christianity requires, when God, by his providence, is effecting great public changes, that "we come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty;" and we shall, perhaps, be reminded, that the doctrine of contingencies, as already stated, favours this assertion; "for, surely," it will be added, "there is nothing wrong in joining issue with God himself, to accomplish his designs." This has long been the palladium of certain men of opposition. A wished-for event, conceived to be the will of God, has pressed the mind with a deepening sense of its fancied importance. The conscience itself has been decoyed, and brought with it all the energies of the soul to bear upon the cause.

But here we ask, Can it be always ascertained when God has an immediate influence on present occurrences, and what is his design concerning them, before the chief result begin to be realized? But, admitting this were known, it does not follow that his providential end ought always to be ours; otherwise, for instance, as God had determined to destroy the Jewish nation, it must have been the duty of that people, had they known the Divine purpose, to take no steps whatever to support their sinking country, but rather to contribute all they could to its downfall. Nay, it would follow, that we ought to assist the work of devastation wherever we discover it, in earth-

* On Psalm cxxiv.

quakes, and storms, and war, and famine. The same action, according to the several ends proposed, is qualified with different formalities of good and evil. Let us leave God to govern the world, and strictly attend to our own particular duties. We have precise and suitable rules to go by. He has no rule but his own infinite wisdom, and rectitude, and goodness; and these are rules too high for us,—we cannot attain to them.

But whoever is desirous of effecting, by forcible opposition, any great public change whatever, ought, before he proceeds in its accomplishment, to put these weighty reflections to his judgment and conscience: "Is there any rational probability that this change can possibly be effected? If not, am I justified in attempting such a breach of the public quiet as most likely must be fruitless of every thing but dissatisfaction and disorder? Is the existing evil greater than those evils which may be expected to attend upon the means of the change? Is the case betwixt the government and the people a dubious one, persons of disinterestedness being on both sides? Then, ought not I to consider that the governor is, by office, the umpire of dubious cases, and that I myself have consented to this in my civil conduct? If the alleged corruption is unquestionable, what is its extent? Has it already produced that ruin to the country which could not be surpassed by that of any operative coalition employed against the government? But it may in time ruin the country. Am I sure of that? Can I determine when? And must I say that God Almighty cannot, by gentle means, to me at present unimaginable, correct this corruption? Then, am I justified in doing more than constitutionally and temperately declaring my opinion? In this dilemma, may I confidently hazard some great public concussion? Or, ought I not much rather, in such uncertain circumstances, to abide by my own grand political maxim, that the chief end of all public affairs is the good of the people? And if I cannot admit, that either the governor or the government, considered as particulars, are ordained of God; must I not allow, that public order is his ordinance, and that I am bound to support it to the utmost of my power, and agreeably to the dictates of my own tranquil and unbiassed judgment? In fine: If I profess Christianity, may I not infer, that the scriptural command to pay the public tax, for instance, is grounded more especially on a view to my happiness and peace

of mind, than on the justice of the tax itself? For if the latter were to be my rule, and not the former, even supposing it were proper for me to decide against the legislature, must I not, as there will constantly exist some corruption or another in the best human governments, be greatly diverted from my duty as a private person, and be fruitlessly miserable in my own mind, by a perpetual irritation at the obnoxious case, and a restless contemplation of measures of resistance?"

Our conclusion is this,—that government, as such, is a most sacred ordinance of Heaven, and that he who resists the power, as it is thus explained,—who does any thing which in its nature leads to anarchy; any thing which, if generally adopted, would produce disorder, and civil confusion and misery,—rebels against the God of order and happiness, and righteously incurs the condemnation which is denounced in the context.

Again: It is equally deducible from what has been advanced, that such Divine right of kings as excludes the consideration of those principles and circumstances which usually enter into the tacit but real compact of a state, all of which concentrate so harmoniously in the lofty station of our own supreme ruler, rendering his government the most solid, and venerable, and magnificent structure of human policy in the universe, is a perfect chimera. And kings who hold this doctrine, if any such there be, with a view to the establishment of their authority, must be confessed to give an undesigned encouragement to the worst sort of rebellion. It will follow from this strange doctrine, that he who shall assassinate the sovereign, and assume the throne, may justly hold his place, if possible, as the Lord's anointed. What God has absolutely ordained, is order, of some kind or other; and what he entirely approves is the exercise of moral principle, in particular governments, as the certain cause of the highest public good; and, with regard to the people, to say the least that can be said, he has demanded the spirit of obedience to the sovereign and the laws.

II. THE TEXT ILLUSTRATED.

We have dwelt the longer on the preceding part, because its importance is not merely intrinsic; it is also fundamental to those branches of the subject which remain to be discussed. Nor will it be necessary now to enlarge. The validity of government, as a Divine institution, being clearly understood; it

characters and bearings, its forms and examples, will be the more easily appreciated as admirably illustrative both of its origin and design.

Those advantages of government in general, and of the best governments in particular, which are purely political, are not more numerous than important. But to remark on topics so prominently secular would chime but harshly with the pious melancholy of this mournful occasion. Neither do we intend farther to reflect on government as a system of rule and order, but as it stands connected with those marked distinctions of property, condition, and character, which prevail throughout the whole of human society. And the importance of this connexion is most obvious; for there are not wanting those, even in Christian countries, who, with a plausible righteousness and humanity, contend for an equal distribution of the good things of this life, in direct opposition to the will of God as most unequivocally announced both by Revelation and Providence; and when this doctrine comes in contact with certain passions of the mind, the most unhappy consequences, but for the suppressive and regulating authority of government, would rapidly ensue. This gives us occasion still farther to show the sacred original and character of government, by touching, at least, the importance of those distinctions for the continuance of which it was mainly instituted.

We think no one can doubt the purpose of God, that men should submit to such distinctions, as long as this mortal state of imperfection is continued. And from the magnitude of government, as subordinate to their support, we may conclude, they possess some inconceivable value in the general scheme of Providence. That value must be principally derived from this circumstance,—that the whole is designed as a preparation for a more equalized and enduring state beyond the grave; otherwise, it will be difficult to discover any great advantages connected with some of the inferior and more unhappy of those distinctions. Let us duly esteem what is temporary, and enjoy it; but, if far higher advantages result from the whole arrangement, let us not forget to applaud the wisdom and mercy of the contrivance. If eternal morality and religion can harmonize, and inspirit so discordant an army, and obtain by its means the sublimest victories and the richest spoils, let us join in the cause, and partake of its triumphs.

The scale of things to which we refer is amply supported by the analogies of nature. "One star differeth from another star in glory." The whole creation is formed of distinct divisions which mutually support and excel each other; the very lowest possessing valuable properties which are denied to the highest; just as the foot, notwithstanding its inferiority, can perform an important office to which the head must not pretend. The animal tribes also rise above each other in a very remarkable gradation.

Nor must the charms of variety be passed in silence, as witnessed on the wide field of a well-regulated state. Of all subjects capable of form, and proportion, and contrast, and picture, human character and action, to a contemplative mind, are the most touching and interesting. But these must disappear, were the whole of society on the same level: As in a country of equal surface, the prospect is not so striking as where the scene is lifted up to meet the eye in rocks, and woods, and hills. But this, perhaps, is the least of the advantages in question. Of others which are more important, we will briefly mention a few.

In the first place, the distinctions we have named most obviously give rise to many excellent virtues and qualities, which could not otherwise exist. Indeed, duty in general is founded on relations.

Governors may exercise high justice, impartiality, firmness, munificence, clemency, condescension. The governed may show reverence, obedience, and subordination. Nor let it hastily be thought, that these latter qualities are not to be ranked among advantages; and that the virtues of submissiveness are dastardly, and inconsistent with a noble spirit. The gentleness so sedulously cultivated by the knights of our ancient chivalry suggests an opposite opinion. It is a maxim, that he is not fit to govern who is unwilling to be governed. The importance of submission as a virtue is allowed even by those who are the most insubordinate opposers of authority and rule; for it not unfrequently happens that such persons demand it in a tone of great haughtiness from their families and domestics, and are remarkable for discourtesy towards those who differ from them in political opinions. Above all, submission is of the very essence of Christianity, and shone as a prevailing excellence in the character of Him who is our "Lord and Master," and who came to "give us an example, that we might follow his steps."

Hence it must be acknowledged that the virtues above-mentioned are most amiable, yet altogether distinct from any display of moral excellence, however high, which might exist in a state of equal society. The same might be said of the mercy, and charity, and bounty of the rich; and of the honesty, and industry, and patience of the poor. Besides, though there are numbers above us in the scale of life, there are also many below us; and, thus, we may feelingly discover the comparative, and thence may judge of the real, value of our actual state and being; which we could not do without a comprehensive view of the whole gradation. Here gratitude will take her stand, and feelingly resound, in God's high praises, the mighty debt she still must owe.

The perpetual activities and agitations of society, occasioned by those hopes and fears which the distinctions awaken, cannot fail, other things being equal, greatly to improve the character, which otherwise might, probably, be moulded of its essence through stagnation. The actual state of things excites a laudable emulation, and affords a wide scope for perpetual advancement. By this means the very habit of aspiring is greatly strengthened; which, though it be frequently abused, is, when its objects are "honest, and lovely, and of good report," of the utmost importance.

We remark, in the second place, that the distinctions of society, by the effect of comparison, very strikingly set forth the perfections of God. For instance: They furnish sensible proofs of his supremacy and power. The hero must die, who probably has been the death of thousands. The king himself must fall before the irresistible decree of Heaven, though assisted by physicians, and surrounded by guards; though, perhaps, his very name has spread terror through the whole nations of his enemies. Some have rendered the text, "The powers that be are placed under God," alluding to an army as ranged under the eye and command of a general. This shows the mighty operative authority of God. When He sounds a retreat from the field of life, the highest and most sanguine officer must obey. This is a more lively and affecting demonstration of the Divine power than the abstract doctrine of omnipotence, however forcibly asserted, could possibly produce. The death of a peasant does not thus impress us, though the fact, considered physically, is the same with that of the dissolution of the highest majesty on

earth. It is thus the glory of a conqueror is abundantly enhanced by great power and bravery in those whom he has conquered. It is thus, in like manner, poets, when they intend to heighten a particular passion, bring it into contest with another of uncommon strength. For instance: Pride or revenge will master covetousness.

Observe, again, with what impartial justice does Heaven rule the affairs of men; how immaculate his holiness, and how strong his abhorrence of sin, when the ordained manifestations of his displeasure against it are so uniformly and indiscriminately administered! Not even the deepest piety, united with the loftiest rank and station, and with the most extensive public usefulness, can exempt from the stroke of death. "Death hath passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Such impressive discoveries could not be made, but for the existing distinctions of society.

Nay, the goodness of God (finely balancing his judgments) shines forth in the elevation to rank and property of as many as the moral state of society will bear, showing that he is not unwilling to bestow a profusion of the good things of this life, (for giving would not impoverish him,) but that, supposing society should not be injured by a general influx of riches, he would freely pour them upon us.

Another most important use of the distinctions is this: They assist us to comprehend the plan, and in some degree prepare us to submit to the laws, of redemption. They teach us something of the nature of authority, of law, of obligation, of disobedience, of rewards and punishments, of satisfaction and atonement; as so many analogies, by which we rise to the conception of resembling but infinitely-transcendent subjects in the scheme of redemption, and which are presented to us in the Holy Scriptures under the evident supposition, that we have been already made acquainted with them; and, therefore, the things themselves are not presented to us in God's word in any shape of definitions; but as truths, and axioms, and circumstances clearly understood, as to all essential purposes of present and eternal salvation.

Richard Baxter observes, that in his youth he had made some considerable mistakes on the subject of justification, not having as yet sufficiently studied the nature of law as practised in human societies.

Suppose the case of a savage brought up in circumstances approaching to perfect solitude. It would not be possible, at least for some time, to teach him even the first principles of religion, merely for want of the analogies already mentioned. And let it be remembered, that these, at most, are but the shadows; the Divine subjects are the original realities,—the platform or model of all the grand relations and arrangements of temporal society. God is not figuratively, but truly and substantially, the "King of saints," "our heavenly Father," "our Master in heaven," and the "Friend of sinners."

And from the experience of similar relations in natural life, we not only become capable of religious instruction, but are, in some respects, prepared, by fitting dispositions and feelings, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, to enter into actual covenant with God, as sustaining the gracious characters above-expressed. For example: The subordination which is so properly impressed upon our will and passions in youth, is a part of the necessary discipline of our whole life; and is designed to transmit us to the succeeding authorities of masters, of political rule, of God, and of religion, somewhat softened and subdued, as a gradual preparation for these more important stages of the moral trial. Instances of bad or injudicious education, and of excessive indulgence in particular,—and, also, instances of the opposite description,—will, if candidly examined, cast much light on this remark.

Such are a few of the leading advantages, which government, through the medium of its effects on society, produces for the advancement of human character and happiness. The subject is capable of great expansion. But enough, perhaps, has been said, to show that the ordination affirmed in the text bears the signature of God, is worthy of his perfections, and, by consequence, deserves not merely our cordial acquiescence, but also our most exalted esteem and veneration.

III. THE TEXT EXEMPLIFIED.

We have said, it is our duty, as professing Christians, to set God always before us. The peculiar interest or feeling excited by an event must always be qualified by a due sense of the Divine presence and control: Thus nothing, however small or common, as before suggested, can wear, in our view, the aspect of indifference. And though some events are, in themselves, much more important than others, it will be found, upon reflec-

tion, that they are only so because there is so much more of God —of his power, or holiness, or wisdom, or goodness—connected with them. This principle, while it guides us by its beautiful and certain light, through scenes which, otherwise, would present the appearance of a dark and mazy wilderness of disjointed and insignificant particulars, will enable us, by its discoveries, to appreciate the comparative richness of the parts, and sometimes to realize the magnificent union of the whole.

With this view, we have chosen for our subject, on the present occasion, not the life, or reign, or demise of his late majesty; but the providence of God,—the Divine science with which these are connected, in the character of particular facts; and without the consideration of which, indeed, they could only amuse us by their passing splendour, as boys are sometimes amused with the mere trick of philosophical experiments, caring nothing either for the profound theory of the operation, or for the beneficial uses to which the whole may be applied.

The life of a king is properly historical; for even his private character and manners, when published, operate politically, and impress the public mind, not in the ordinary way of moral influence by example, his conduct being exhibited in circumstances so peculiar as to be sometimes improper for imitation; but as intimating the will of the sovereign on subjects of this nature, and as recommending them by the lustre of his rank. His good conduct, as a man, is a silent proclamation of virtue; a softened enforcement of certain moral excellencies, which could hardly be embodied in a book of statutes. Still authority is implied: What with others is a request, is with the sovereign a command. His power is, therefore, more extended in forming the manners of a people, than the moral influence could be; since more are inclined, from fashion, to imitate the manners of their superiors, than purely from the moral sympathy of the case.

The will of the sovereign is, however, more particularly seen in his public acts, and in the general administration of the laws. The manifestations of his power, and justice, and clemency, are all, in some way or other, announcements of his will. Some obvious practical inference will rise upon the mind from the view of these attributes. We ought to fear his power, to bow to his justice, and to prize his clemency. He bears the sword, but not in vain; not for a show of ostentation, but for purposes of public utility. "He is a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that

do well." Thus the value of an excellent sovereign to any people reaches far beyond the limits of that influence which his private virtues may possess as objects of implicit imitation by all.

But the moral influence of his late majesty's example was of the highest importance to the country. It was owing to the force, for instance, of this illustrious example that the flagrant irreligiousness of France, particularly including the violation of the Sabbath, was not adopted by the superior and more opulent classes of society; an adoption this, which, meeting with the natural corruption of man, would soon have become as general as society itself.

It will, however, be apparent, that our plan does not admit, as to his late majesty, either of an artificial panegyric of his moral excellencies, or of a biographical enumeration of his private actions; though such designs, (designs, indeed, to which I must not pretend,) if ably executed, would be extremely engaging and instructive. We rather wish, while reflecting on the general subject of his life and reign, to "behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord;" to mark the intentions of God with respect to Britain and the world; the perfections of his Deity, as strongly delineated in this particular instance of political power. For, what we have said of the kings of the earth will be much more forcible as applied to the "Majesty on high;" that the manifestations of himself, as supreme Governor, are all, in some way or other, announcements of his will; just as the Sacred Writings express many points of duty, not delivered in the form of exhortation or command, but easily deducible from the very nature and impression of the sentiment; whether it be a doctrine, or a motive, or even some general truth, or some particular historic fact.

Let us, then, in the first place, behold the Divine goodness in bestowing a king on Britain, of a character so sound and excellent as that of George III.

He seems to have possessed the most essential, the most important moral qualification of the heart,—that of truth and honesty. This "leavened the whole lump;" this was seen through all the bearings of his conduct, and gave to every action the transparency of the brook. His intentions were evidently the offspring of the purest moral principle. He was never known to say or to do any thing which required explanation. This sincere disposition, combining with the ardour of his temperament,

formed him to that uncommon firmness which gave steadiness and efficiency to his designs.

His political rectitude is acknowledged, by all contending parties, to have been the most unbiassed, and the most complete. Even those who have differed from him, on some important measures of his government, confess, that his patriotism was not to be surpassed; that he "would have dyed, with his own brave blood, the last sand on the shores of this island, in which he was born, to preserve her ancient majesty unblenched, her rights unquestioned, her primitive empire undiminished." It is said, a nobleman, who knew him well, declared, "the king would live on bread and water to save the constitution from injury. He would, at any time, suffer martyrdom for the laws of England." Whatever errors might occasionally disturb a soul so truly pure and majestic, the general current of its operations must have been most admirable, and most important to the public interests.

Justice and humanity appear to have been singularly combined in the character of his late majesty The former was seen in the fate of the unhappy Dr. Dodd, whom the king, indeed, was most desirous to save, while, at least in his own judgment, impartial righteousness forbade. The latter—which extended to many beautiful instances in his private life, such as, if time allowed, it would be delightful to specify—was, in a great degree, the result of his domestic feelings and habits; for, he was, doubtless, a perfect model to the whole kingdom of the conjugal and parental virtues and affections. No one can be genuinely humane, beyond the limits of his own domestic circle, who is a stranger to the sensibilities and amities of home; for he has no experimental references by which to judge of the touching interests of others in distress. He may, indeed, imagine, and compose a "Sentimental Journey," abounding with the most artful affectation of the tenderest pity and benevolence; but the cruel neglect and brutality of his conduct towards a wife and children, who have the prime demand upon his affections, will demonstrate how morbid is the feeling of this boasting philanthropist. History will teach us, in many shocking instances of injustice and of cruelty, what a blessing to the nation, and how clearly the gift of Heaven, were the virtues just-named, which shone with such eminence in the character of our late revered sovereign.

His morality and religion are universally acknowledged to have been above all praise. Here we may confidently appeal to

the test which our Lord has given us: "By their fruits ye shall know them." His temperance, nay, his abstinence, is said to have been "scarcely equalled by any private person in his dominions who had enough to eat." His charities were known to bear a very large proportion to his income; besides a thousand pounds which he annually allowed for the propagation of the Gospel. Moral and religious writers often received marks of his royal favour, while those of an opposite description were uniformly discouraged by him. Public and domestic worship he most strictly observed. He read a part of Dr. Barrow's Sermons in his own family every Sunday evening throughout the year. He attended prayers, in his own private chapel, every morning at eight o'clock; and, in the latter part of his life, it was, we recollect, on one occasion, most impressively, most pleasingly affecting, to see him lift his aged hands and darkling eyes to heaven, audibly responding, "We are thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture."

It is worthy of remark, that the virtues of his late majesty were not only sincere; they were, in several instances, fine and intense. His firmness was not the proud and unrelenting severity of Frederick the Great. It was the calm, enlightened, steadfast, manly continuation of a conscientious or generous effort, in some cause, not of selfish, but of public, importance. His piety was not the formal, uncharitable, and austere enthusiasm, if not hypocrisy, of Cromwell; it was unpretending, it was liberal, it was cheerful, it was practical. Dr. Beattie was of opinion, he possessed a strong understanding, and a great fund of information; but nothing was more distant from him than the weak and pedantic ostentation and authorship of James I. Nay, it appears, he would sometimes relax the ardours of royalty, by assuming a playfulness not exactly of a piece with his actual good sense. His very state was the natural, easy, graceful dignity of the best-bred gentleman in his dominions. The same might be said of other excellencies of this distinguished character.

Now, that the goodness of God to the nation was signalized in the life of so pious a king, will not be denied: It ought also to be adored. A good king was always considered as the blessing of Heaven upon a people. The great writers of Heathen antiquity expressly affirmed, that "the very reputation of a prince for virtue and piety was a grand pillar of the

state."* Cromwell is, perhaps, an instance; who was greatly feared, and whose alliance was much sought by most of the European states. Observe, also, that when a message from Henry III. to Lewellyn, prince of Wales, threatened him with war, he replied, "I dread his prayers and almsgiving more than all his army." Thus we have been twice blessed in his late majesty; first, in the gift from heaven of so excellent a sovereign; and, secondly, in the favour of God upon the country for his sake.

We remark, in the next place, that the gracious agency of God is manifest in many principal events of the late reign.

Here, it is impossible to adduce a single statement which is not generally known. The contemplation of the events as measures emanating from the great Ruler of all things is, perhaps, not so general. If the penal evil which is done upon the earth be done by him, what shall we say of the beneficent good? This, doubtless, must proceed, still more directly, from his gracious will and purpose. Then let us always be careful to pass our eye beyond terrestrial majesty, to that amazing power behind the throne, which is incomparably greater than the throne itself.

Those events which are exclusively political we omit, for reasons which every one will confess to be as valid as they are obvious; though the unexampled elevation of the country, during the last reign, to every kind of honour and prosperity, however we may of late have been lowered in some of these respects, might be instructively witnessed as a sublime manifestation of the power and beneficence of God towards Britain.

It may, however, be pleasing just to add, in the nervous language of a public journal,† which glances at the great political influence of the late king, and whose partiality to government will not be suspected,—that, "by the inspirations of his fortitude," (for he it was who inflexibly determined on the war, even in opposition to the reasoning of Mr. Pitt, whose resignation, on that account, followed, for several hours, till advised to resume his office,) "Englishmen maintained a contest for human liberty, unparalleled in the records of war. By their example, other countries were roused; and the nations of Europe, combined in one sacred cause, overthrew, in a moment, that oppressive power

* See Arist. Pol. b. v. † "The Times."

against which the repeated alliances of their rulers had proved unequal to defend them.

It is obvious to remark, that religious liberty, by his official enactments, and by the force of his own expanded views upon the subject, frequently expressed by him, has almost attained its full perfection in this country; a blessing this, which never can be sufficiently prized, and which bears the most unquestionable marks of its Divine origin; especially as it was imparted by means of a sovereign who, as he was truly pious, could not be imagined to have sanctioned it, either from mere policy, on the one hand; (for he could not possibly be indifferent to the interests of religion;) or from a superstitious attachment to religion itself, on the other; as such an attachment is in its own nature narrow, and bigoted, and intolerant.

Connected with this, is another observation, equally evident, and, if possible, still more important; which is this: That by the freedom of his laws, and the united piety and liberality of his example, he impressed a character, upon the age, of Christian forbearance, and zeal, and benevolence, which, at length, produced those grand religious institutions, that threaten satan's kingdom with a rapid and complete demolition. You will perceive that we allude to the Bible Society, to Missionary establishments, and to schools for the religious instruction of the poor. The latter received his own personal support and countenance. We can hardly think of any other prince, under whom these institutions could be supposed to have arisen. Thus God, in our opinion, has marked the reign of George III. as by the seal of his own direct ordination.

A most eventful achievement, in every point of view, was the conquest of India. Who can calculate the probable advantages to the whole world, from the future civilization and improvement of a country so rich and so immense? But as a field for the propagation of the Gospel—since entered on with wonderful success—it yields a prospect the most certain and magnificent.

The late reign has also been most eminent for religion and morality. Its equal in these respects is not to be met with in the whole of British history. If we looked merely at the wickedness of the age, (which we acknowledge to have been also great,) we should say, in the melancholy strain of some, it was an age the most degenerate. It appears, however, that public

crimes have been greatly diminished, when the population has been compared with that of former periods. An unexampled revival of religion has long been gradually prevailing in the several communities of professing Christians. "The fruits of good living" and of public charity are proofs of this. The emulation of the parties, in promoting schemes of public usefulness, has been most honourable, and most animated. Now, we can hardly conjecture how this noble contention could have existed at all, but for the liberal declarations of George III. on his accession to the throne; which were succeeded by his most gracious regard, uniformly expressed, for the rights of conscience, and for pious men of every denomination. No preceding sovereign possessed an equal policy, or charity, with that of this incomparable prince, on the subject of religious liberty.

His encouragement of good learning, and of the fine arts, did not only tend to improve the genius, and to exalt the reputation, of the country, it also fostered its virtue. For, since truth and nature, in her grandest forms, are the subjects of these studies, they lead to morality, unless counteracted by the influence of passion. As the founder of the Royal Academy, he must not be considered as only patronizing the means of an empty and gaudy enjoyment; but that which adds, at least, an interesting grace to life, and tends to cherish some of its best feelings and affections.

Now, had there been no government; no British constitution like that which God has, during many centuries, been interweaving for us into the texture of his providence; no supreme magistrate, at least essentially, if not precisely, resembling George III. in character and resources;—all of which, we need not stop to show, demonstrate the finger of Almighty God;—can it be rationally conceived, that the great public advantages, some of which we have just touched upon, could possibly have arisen? And, though the whole has occurred in the natural and common line of proportioned cause and effect, still the pious and candid observer cannot fail to mark a peculiar management of God in behalf of the country; and the whole is as much the work of God, and as much deserves our grateful acknowledgments, as if it had been perfectly miraculous.

Lastly: We observe, that certain attributes of Deity are sometimes forcibly displayed in a particular arrangement, or coincidence, or other circumstance of the late reign.

The prevention of great national guilt, through the influence of a sovereign so peculiarly excellent, is a case of this description. In consequence of unexampled commercial prosperity, of agricultural improvement, and of discoveries in the arts, an immense tide of riches flowed upon us. A new state of society, high and luxurious, began to succeed. This was not only in a great degree unfavourable to government, by impeding the freedom of its operations, through a certain violence of tone and passion in the public mind which it produced, but by its tending to inflame the moral corruption of the age, it threatened ultimate destruction to the country itself; such as history informs us has often been the fate of kingdoms abandoned to vice. And we have sometimes seen, in this respect, that what are usually termed "good times" have absolutely been the worst of times. But a check was in some degree imposed on this. Nay, the opulence of society was often taught to seek a different direction, in subserviency to mental improvement, to public charity, and to religious zeal.

The appointment, therefore, to the British throne, of his late majesty shows the Divine wisdom and goodness in a strong and interesting light. Which of his royal predecessors could have restrained and formed such a mighty people, under such difficult circumstances, with so much judgment and effect? Suppose a king like Charles II. had been permitted to combine with an age of such wealth and thirst for the equipage and pleasures of life; is it not extremely probable, that the morals both of the court, and of every other class of society, would have been ruined beyond recovery? Then let us set a proper value on this providential coincidence between the virtuous character of George III. and the tendency to vice of the age in which he lived; a tendency which seemed to require, and which, accordingly, received, no ordinary counteraction.

The very great length of the late king's reign, his life having long been preserved amidst a variety of contingencies peculiarly dangerous, deserves our most attentive remark, as proceeding from the wise and powerful hand of God, and as denoting the patient protraction of his goodness towards us. Machiavel himself observes,* that two immediate successions of virtuous princes cannot fail to be productive of grand effects. Two

* In his "Discourses," b. i. c. 20.

reigns of ordinary length will not surpass, as to continuance, the memorable one which we are now reviewing. The advantages of the late king's reign received an extraordinary confirmation and permanence from time; as he was providentially permitted to work them, by successive efforts, into the national character, and actually to transmit them, by his own personal influence, from one generation to another. To illustrate this, we only need refer to the Reformation. That great event was accomplished under the pious authority of Edward VI. but he was soon called away to his heavenly reward. In the following reign of Mary, it met with a fiery trial; which only tended to purify and establish it. But in the long reign of Elizabeth, the work was completed, was blended with the earliest attachments and associations of all the youth of the land, who were reared under her principles and influence for many years, till all those who had witnessed the grand struggle, and who, perhaps, in many instances, were undecided to the last, had died away, and popery was forgotten. In like manner will the advantages of the last reign, we trust, be perpetuated to many generations. Society has its habitudes, which, as well as those of individual character, may be improved, or changed, or secured, just as causes may be directed, and have time to operate.

In a word, the controlling and bountiful perfections of God shine forth, at least as it respects the cause of Christianity, with irresistible evidence and grandeur, in the general features of the late reign. The combination of these features marks design the most direct, and skill the most profound. The whole presents us with a striking practical illustration and proof of this sublime aphorism, "The powers that be are ordained of God." This extraordinary reign appears to have been intended to sink, and eventually to extinguish, the abounding mischiefs of infidelity and wickedness; more especially the pestiferous doctrines and influence of France, which threatened to deluge, with horrible eruption, the wide and beautiful fields of civilized society. It seems to have been equally designed, in some of its remoter consequences, (for the advancement of religion is not the immediate object of any government,) to furnish the most important facilities for the circulation of the Gospel throughout every kingdom on the face of the globe.

To his late majesty, under God, we owe, in the highest degree, these glorious results. The suppression of moral evil,

and the advancement of moral good, of every description, appear to have been the grand ruling objects of his whole life. He, as the accomplished hero of the most important and most animating of all causes,—the cause of God and of man,—gave decision to the field; and, having struck the fatal blow of defence at his enemies in the close encounter, and reaching round, with dauntless bravery, on those at greater distance, sunk with glory, in conclusion of a long and most brilliant career, leaving the contest to be finished, with comparative ease, by his courageous survivors. The whole world will strive to emulate so glorious an example; and, with the assistance of Heaven, "the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom" from satan, who still usurps authority over mankind in general, "and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

IV. THE TEXT IMPROVED.

HAVING entered more fully into the subject of the preceding part than was at first intended, we can only now suggest the following reflections, without discussing them at large.

And here we repeat it, as a primary observation in point of importance, that so far, at least, as government is the ordinance of God, so far it must deserve our reverence and support. One scriptural designation of "the powers" is that of "gods." Admitting the British government to be substantially legitimate, (and whether its defects or corruptions, so denominated, do properly and entirely annul its authority, and deface its sacred characters, I leave to the judgment of all enlightened and impartial men to determine,) the king is clothed with a Divine authority in the administration of the laws. He is the viceroy of God. He bears officially the image of God, of his justice and holiness, of his paternity and love. Nay, he shadows forth the natural attributes of Deity. By his civil ubiquity, he is understood to know whatever may relate to the public welfare; and, by his power, he is supposed to be capable of doing all things required for the good of the nation. Even eternity is adumbrated. The first king of Salem is thought, by some, to be described as "without father and mother," with a view to this analogy. And our maxim is, that the king of England never dies. Now, can "railing accusations," (I say not constitutional and temperate appeals,) brought against such

a power, be viewed as any other than "speaking evil of dignities?"

It does not affect the question, if we admit the real existence of great corruption in the state. We have not taken it upon us, in any part of this discourse, to determine that point; our object being the inculcation of religious duty, whatever be the circumstances of the government under which we live. But, supposing corruption could be cured, for the time, by clamour and violence, rather than by those tranquil measures which accord with the constitution which Christianity inspires, and which allow of sufficient energy; still the evils of such kind of opposition might be eventually serious. To rail against men in office, might be comparatively harmless, if it went no further; but as the odium is dashed, though, perhaps, unintentionally, on the office itself, it tends to enervate all authority, and to render inefficient the most unquestionable and wholesome laws.

A matchless writer finely observes, "We should approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe, and trembling solicitude."* Suppose, indeed, that young persons in general were to practise a flippant and contemptuous opposition to their parents, whenever they themselves might judge unfavourably, or had really some reason so to do, of the conduct of those parents; must not all order be poisoned at its fountain-head, and the very character of paternity itself be weakened and degraded? Suppose a youth, because his own conduct is comparatively decent, and that of his parent very wrong, should go about every where exclaiming, "My father is a fool, and a rogue, and a tyrant! Am I obliged to bear his insults? What shall we do to mend or get rid of such old dotards?" Would not such a child be looked upon as striking at the law of nature, and as flatly resisting, with a mere show of right, the ordinance of God? Would he not be viewed by all mankind as extremely ungrateful, and as a dangerous example to the rising generation? Would not the effects of his behaviour reach beyond the evils he objects to, and tend to undermine the influence of what is really good in parents? When similar indignity is thrown upon the higher powers, it cannot fail to re-act upon the private relations of life; and to unfound, in some degree, the very principles of obedience in general.

* Burke; see his "Reflections."

We ought, therefore, to be cautious, lest our language and spirit, when we exercise our just right of remarking upon government, should not be scripturally respectful. For we are commanded to "honour the king." The Jews of old "worshipped the Lord and the king." A king without honour cannot long maintain his station. By giving honour to the king we give honour to God, whose minister he is. We also, in effect, give honour to the country, and to ourselves. This reflection we deem to be an inference of direct improvement from the subject.

Another observation to be made upon the text is this: That while it obviously infers a just obedience to the reigning powers, the doctrine of passive obedience, as unlimited and undefined, it cuts up by the roots; for, such powers themselves being dependent upon God, it is evident they ought not to injure His authority, or to enjoin what clearly stands in opposition to His will. To Him alone must we present an entire obedience, without question, and without demur.

But "passive obedience" is a phrase which requires explanation, since all obedience is passive, in a strict and proper sense; and since also, in another view, no rational obedience is altogether passive, not even that which we owe to God himself. Does it imply a submission, yielded merely because of the king's command, without admitting any other consideration? Then we renounce it as inapplicable to men of understanding. On the contrary, we obey, because we believe the power to be of God; because we have civilly consented to be ruled by him; because we deem a reasonable prudence requires us to obey; and because the Holy Scriptures command our obedience. This submission, it is hoped, is neither ignorant nor servile. It is surely not degrading to follow the prescriptions of our medical advisers, though, perhaps, we do not understand them, and know nothing of the physical grounds upon which they are composed. We use our own reason, with a suitable dignity, in consenting to the probabilities, that such men are fit to take the care of our health. And if we change them a thousand times, still we must submit, and still we consent to do so. And if with equal frequency we should change, not only the governors, but the form of government itself, in every case we could only agree to be ruled against our own will. No obedience can be absolutely passive which proceeds, not only upon conscious moral obligations, but also

upon the strong and legitimate presumptions of a thinking and free agent.

In matters of indifference, it is proper to obey, while the law remains in force. In things which interfere with conscience, we must disobey, because they are not indifferent. To yield against our conscience, is to lose our souls; a loss, which nothing can repair. Temporal losses, however great, may be more than remunerated. But if any one should say, "My conscience will not permit me to yield to any law which I judge to be wrong;" then we say his conscience is perverted, because this position manifestly opens the flood-gates to universal rebellion and disorder. It is against the very nature of political government, which fundamentally implies the renunciation of our own will, that, in exchange for this natural right, we may receive those more valuable civil rights, which could not otherwise exist at all. Besides, it is unscriptural in the highest degree; for it clashes with forbearance, and forgiveness, and charity, and a whole train of virtues, which are essential to the Christian character.

We reflect, in the next place, on the devout and awful homage which is due to the God of providence. He is the "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" the first link in the vast chain of intelligent existence; the prime Mover of the immense tide of secondary operations. To forget God, is at once most criminal, and most irrational. To share the passing enjoyments of life, without extending our ideas beyond what is literally perceptible, is to act like the beasts, whose powers are completely engrossed by their fodder, without the least understanding of its origin, or preparation, or ultimate intention. A sublunary king receives our reverence and dread; let us lift our view to Him, of whom it is affirmed, "The Lord Most High is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth." We honour the passing shade; let us adore the sublime, the eternal reality.

The emblematic wheels of Ezekiel, and their living creatures, and the mutual elevation of both above the earth, as a beautiful picture of Providence, will assist our labouring thoughts. Mark, also, the same grand connexion of causes and effects, differently expressed: "I will hear, saith the Lord; I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel." All depend on God; he alone is independent. Let us give

wing, indeed, to the mind, in her contemplations on the present universe; but she will build her nest, and seek her refuge and her solace in the Rock of eternal ages.

And what an exquisite happiness, how unutterably sweet, to intermingle the idea of His beneficent agency with all that is visible, with all that occurs on the scene of human life! For, He who sits upon the throne of universal empire is the "Shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep;" the infinite Fountain whence all the streams of love and of happiness continually flow. It is Jesus Christ, according to the majority of interpreters, who proclaims, in the person of Eternal Wisdom, "By me kings reign." The supreme sceptre is swayed by the hand which once was pierced with nails for love of human kind. All things receive an essential qualification and tincture from the blood of Christ. His cross is the grand pillar of our world. And he rules over all, not only in the prerogative of his own eternal Godhead, but, as Redeemer, in the right of a Divine grant from the Father, of lawful conquest over satan, and of a free election of his saints. May we all become his willing people in this the day of his most gracious power!

To conclude: The doctrine of the text also teaches, that our subordinate situations in society are divinely ordained; and that, consequently, it becomes us to acquiesce with cheerfulness in their appointment. There are, no doubt, certain cases in which men may properly aspire beyond their original lot in life; but they are pointed out by Providence, and clearly marked as extraordinary. Indeed, the nature of society could not admit them to be general. If they were, it would cause a ruinous gap in the state. The advancement, however, ought always to be effected under the direction of Providence, and the operation of moral principle. If we cannot attain wealth and its advantages without fraud, we must be content to die in comparative poverty. To labour, either with the sweat of the body, or with that of the mind, is the decree of God. If it be a curse, it is the curse of our heavenly Father, and accompanied with many alleviations. To attempt to fly from it, and to cancel the very terms upon which we received our existence, is to incur far heavier curses, and far severer penalties.*

Let us, therefore, avoid that false species of condolence with

* See Burke on "A Regicide Peace," Letter 3.

the inferior classes of society which is too often substituted for an actual benevolence, and which, instead of soothing, irritates the temper with aggravated pains and discontents. Let us mutually, in privation and suffering, recommend those remedies which all must acknowledge to be scriptural,—patience, labour, sobriety, frugality, and religion. If we adopt these in the first place, and abide by them, we may then resort to political remedies in particular, with the greater safety and success: The mind will then preserve its balance; will be clear in determining, and cool and firm in action; and fatal errors and improper passions will be neutralized the moment they arise.

Indeed, whatever be our situation in society, we have infinitely greater reason to rejoice and sing praise, than to murmur and complain. "The life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment." Man must be valued as to his nature and ultimate destination, rather than as marked by the superficial and uncertain circumstances of his present condition. Let us be thankful that God loves us; that all things are designed to "work together for our good;" and that, through faith in the blood of Christ, who now sustains for us the glorious regency of heaven and earth, our grave may be the passage to a state of immortal felicity, in which we may be equal to kings themselves. For, in the lowest rank of society we may exercise, as to the principle, all the essential virtues of religion and morality, even those of justice and benevolence, to a degree as much entitled to the evangelical rewards of eternity, as that of the same virtues more illustriously displayed, in regard of the manner and effects, by the most opulent and elevated characters of mankind.

SERMON V.

GOOD THINGS FOR GOOD PEOPLE.

God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy.—Eccles. ii. 26.

Religious truth, whatever be the weight of its subject, or the power of its language, cannot operate as the effectual means of our salvation without the special influence of God the Holy Ghost. This is so manifest, that even the words of inspiration, employed as a moral instrument in the absence of this agency, fall equally short of its grand design with the weakest endeavours of unassisted human speech.

Still, the methods of address adopted in the Holy Scriptures are admirably suited to fulfil their intention; so far, at least, as the nature of means is concerned. They show a noble superiority to petty rules of arrangement in their own beautiful disorder; but the extreme simplicity with which Divine things are expressed, in the cooler moments of the writer, and his perfect sincerity, and freedom from all artifice, when the boldest language and illustrations are seized by him, together with the great importance of the things themselves, may well attract attention, and influence the heart.

Thus, viewing means as variously fitted for their purposes, few portions of the Sacred Book, perhaps, exert a more agreeable, a more practical, or more steady power upon the mind, than those which exhibit human character in all its diversified relations and qualities. Sometimes we have faithful portraits of men in real life, which illustrate the nature and practicability of the principles; and sometimes we have fancy pictures, if we may use the expression, showing, by the extraordinary scale of the description, what man might be, as to goodness or badness, were the

principles and powers of his nature very fully developed. And we are not unfrequently presented with what may be termed "an historical composition;" or, men engaged in some important transaction, or placed in some affecting situation, and as involved in the consequences of their own vice or virtue.

And sometimes good and bad men are held up to view in pairs, that the contrast may give depth and force to the piece; and that the whole soul of the spectator, through all her sympathies of love and hatred, hope and fear, may be struck at once, and promptly yield to the valuable instruction which shines out in every part. The first Psalm is a brief but beautiful instance of this kind of writing; and our text presents us with a just specimen of a still more frequent and compendious kind of description,—a collect, or condensed form of its subjects,—in which the truth of God bursts forth as from a point, and in a moment, on the understanding of the serious reader. "God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit."

It is the happiness of all who properly peruse the Scriptures, to unfold, by prayer and meditation, and to appropriate as their own inheritance, the plentiful and precious treasures so frequently concealed in such brief but "lively oracles." At present we select, for our consideration, the first of the above characters, as the most important and most pleasant of the two; and implore the indispensable assistance of the "Father of lights" to direct and bless our humble and anxious inquiries. This devout appeal is so much the more necessary, as the subject is not only of extreme importance, but also one on which we may be very easily deceived.

Few subjects, indeed, are more liable to dangerous misapprehension than this of good and evil character. This partly arises from the multitude of various and vague opinions concerning it which prevail among men in general, and partly from a natural impatience of inquiry too often felt, in proceeding to collect, and fix, and harmonize the several senses of the terms by which the Scriptures furnish out the doctrine of God respecting it. But the danger chiefly arises from the corruption of our own hearts. Our pride is singularly sensitive on the question of our goodness. In consequence of this, we form rash and prejudiced conceptions;

and then maintain them with a temper so humoursome and obstinate, that the understanding is thereby still further darkened and seduced. Endeavouring to guard against these dangers, and anxious to know "the truth as it is in Jesus," let us briefly explain the several points relating to the person whom the text describes. These are,—the goodness of his character, the gifts which God bestows upon him, and the connexion that subsists between the character and the gifts.

I. With respect to the first of these, it may be observed, that certain terms in language are of such general application as to require much care to fix upon their strict and proper meaning when applied to particular subjects; for these subjects are often very different in their natures, and yet are all characterized by the same word. Thus we have a beautiful countenance, a beautiful anthem, and a beautiful sentiment in writing; and this variety occasions some difficulty among writers in their attempts to ascertain the true doctrine of beauty. But a word to discriminate every kind of beauty would multiply the language beyond all convenient bounds; and yet, if our powers of mind were commensurate with the use of language so extended on all subjects, it would, no doubt, greatly assist our inquiries concerning them.

"Good," or "goodness," is a term of very extensive application. It was actually applied to the whole of the parts of which the universe consisted, when "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Again: The various meanings of the word in Scripture, as well as in common speech, are numerous. And here our diligence is further called into exercise, because of the nature of language, which is in perpetual flux, frequently assuming fresh powers and significations, not expected at the time of its original construction. Like mercury on a plain surface, it runs in all directions, nor could all the art of man prevent it. For example: In an ancient dialogue, a servant is introduced asking for his gospel; which was nothing more than a coarse garment,—his promised reward as the messenger of good news. Nay, words have been known to pass, at length, into a meaning the very opposite of that which they originally possessed.

Now, the language of God is also the language of men. His inspiration did not re-model it, but stooped to all its natural varieties and properties. We must, therefore, to a certain extent,

apply the common rules of rational interpretation, in our attempts to learn the sense it bears; only taking care to add a peculiar class of rules arising from the extraordinary nature of the subjects themselves, and from the singular senses in which the inspired writers have sometimes employed common words and things as the medium of their revelations; and the Spirit of the Divine Author of those writings must be the spirit of the student who would even apply the best principles of criticism with success; as, for instance, the man who would fully understand and interpret some poetical production, must himself possess a taste to discern the beauties of that kind of composition.

Should it be observed, that "these remarks are not peculiar to our text, but are equally applicable to many other terms and phrases, and still more lengthened forms of speech, contained in the Scriptures;" we reply, This only goes to show the extreme importance of the subject, as affecting our investigations of the word of God in general. In using such unquestionable and certain principles of inquiry, while we study that extraordinary Book which is the unsullied fountain of all religious truth, let us pray with David, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;" and we shall reap far greater benefit than can possibly result from the practice of bringing multitudes of abstract notions from foreign sources, with a view to put them into that already-perfect law.

But, lest we should digress too far, we return to the text. Sometimes the word "good" is used merely as an appellation, holding up to view, as by its handle, the general subject of spiritual goodness, with all its other properties of holiness and righteousness. In other instances, it is intended, like each of these, and similar words, to express a meaning of its own, as strictly descriptive of certain properties and characters of the man to whom it is applied. In either case, however thoughtlessly the reader may pronounce it, because it is common, the signification or bearing of the term is, in the intention of the Holy Ghost, of unspeakable importance. For the attainment of this goodness implies the certain enjoyment of all that is necessary to our welfare. To be good is to be happy; on which account these two expressions are sometimes used in Scripture as synonymous and convertible.

In what the moral goodness of man consists, we learn from Moses, in the book of Genesis, already quoted. Each part of

the creation is described in its own appropriate character and use, and in the connexion between these two. To show the goodness of the heavenly bodies, for example, they are exactly delineated. "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth." And thus of all the rest. Man, however, is described with the greatest nicety and copiousness; as created in the image of God, as the deputed lord and ruler of the creatures, as possessing them for his own enjoyment, as placed in the interesting relations of domestic life, and as required to show the strictest obedience to the commands of his Maker.

Many and various are the notions of expositors as to the precise nature of this image of God. But nearly the whole of these are briefly exploded by St. Paul, where he defines it as consisting in "knowledge, and righteousness, and true holiness;" that is, such knowledge of God as is necessary to the supreme love and worship of his name, and man's proper knowledge of himself, as prepared for the service of God, and as deeply interested in obeying him. Righteousness implies a power and disposition to give to every one that which is just and equal, and lies principally in the will. True holiness belongs to the affections, which actually embrace what the understanding knows is enjoined by God as good, and which are themselves entirely pure, and formed to harmonize with the spiritual excellence proposed to them.

Such is the moral goodness proper to the nature of man. But God now saith, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." This image of his Maker he has entirely lost; and with it he has also lost the favour and protection of God, and all power; and, therefore, he is utterly incompetent to lift himself above the wretchedness of his condition. All this is the consequence of "the one offence," his first transgression. But the nature of man, as man, remains. Were it otherwise, he must either lose his being or his identity, and become a creature, as to essence, perfectly of another kind. It is, then, most reasonable to conclude, that what was the goodness of his nature at the first, is the only perfect goodness of which, in supposition, he is capable. To advance the contrary would be not only to dishonour the wisdom of God in his original formation, but it would also be

absurd in itself. It would go to assert, that his capacity for knowledge would be just as well employed in any defective or miserable knowledge of the creature, as in the true knowledge of the infinite Creator; that while essentially a willing spirit, he might properly will any thing, or nothing, as he pleased, without a difference in such exercises of the mind; and that though he is necessarily the subject of attachments, and swayed by them, yet he need not give himself the least concern about the objects of his affection.

Now, to make man good again, with the same kind of goodness which he possessed in the image of God, is the grand design and scope of the Gospel. This Divine image must be re-created in his soul. The new appearance of this image will differ, in some respects, from the exact character of the first; yet in substance and construction they are both alike. There is even a good sense in which repentance is a feature in the image of God; for in its nature it abhors all sin. As a fruit of faith in believers, it is itself a gracious principle, and therefore not only a means, but an integral part, of holiness. We are holy by a process of separation between sin and the soul: God is holy by his infinite distance from moral evil, without such process. Still, in every thing essential, our holiness is the true and proper image of that which is Divine.

Again: We now possess high qualities, which could not be found in the innocence of Adam,—such as pity, mercy, and the love of enemies. And the reason is, the exemplar is extended, as held up for our imitation, both in the Divine nature and in the humanity of the Son of God. Accordingly, the copy is required to be extended. It is our true and proper goodness, the grand design and law of our existence, to be like God; as far as possible to make his purposes, perfections, and proceedings the rule of our own. In this respect, that is, by imitation as well as by an act of adoption, we must become "the children of our Father which is in heaven." It is then that we are really "partakers of the Divine nature," when we are "conformed to the image of his Son."

As to the exact boundary of that which is imitable in God, the case will regulate itself. For example: The ultimate end of God in all things is, the advancement of his glory. Other ends coalesce with this; but it is infinitely the greatest and best of them all. If we possess the image of God, as to moral purposes,

this also will be our end. This simple principle will combine in itself the whole of this image. With the entire "broad commandment" before us, our supreme inquiry will be fully met,—What will best promote his glory? and how shall I gain strength to put my plans for this in perfect execution? Thus the widest range will be given to the mind in her acquisition and exercise of evangelical goodness. This single view will sweep the entire circle of her duty.

This goodness has no merit on our part, but is entirely the effect of the merit of another, even Jesus, the only Saviour of men. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." That is, the whole affair of your salvation is owing solely to the grace or favour of God. Still the goodness, or holiness, of the believer is inherent,—has a reality and character of its own,—and is "acceptable," or "good," or "well pleasing in his sight," not merely because it originated in his grace, and is purchased by the blood of atonement; but also because it is his "workmanship," is like him, and is worthy of him. "He looks and love his image there;" loves it because it is his image, because it is according to his will, because it is an emanation of his own Divine excellence. All this we may admit, without arrogating to ourselves one iota of the glory, but ascribing salvation wholly and exclusively to "God and the Lamb." This goodness, then, is not of the nature of Adamic innocence, but is a conformity to the new and gracious law of the Gospel. Thus far, and no further, it is rewarded; not that it deserves a reward, irrespective of the promise, for it has no such virtue, considering it as ours; yet, as a fruit of the Spirit, it is intrinsically good, but all the praise belongs to God.

Justification has a very important bearing on our subject. The person of man, body and soul, is the work of the all-perfect God; and in this view it is good. But blasted and withered by guilt and condemnation to eternal death, it is deplorably bad. The physical, intellectual, and moral powers are all shaken. Now, the pardon of the criminal prevents the execution of a sentence which would otherwise be followed by the mutilation of his being, and the infliction of severe pains,—the punishment of his crimes. Justification cancels guilt; and by this means the entire person of the sinner is restored to the favour of his reconciled God, and is covered by the blood of atonement from the curse and its consequences. Thus the natural and material

goodness which man originally possessed is rendered back as his own, to his management and for his happiness.

At present he is not delivered from all the effects of the curse, such as sickness, mental weakness, and dissolution; but if his justification be maintained, he must ultimately rise in the full powers of body and soul into his original relationship and likeness to God, and that with vast improvements. After an exiled offender has received forgiveness, he may experience many hardships in his return to the court of his appeased sovereign. These, however, cannot be attributed to the prince. They are purely the effect of his own guilt: But the time is coming when, in addition to his present partial emancipation, he shall enter into the "perfect liberty" of home and all its joys. So it is with the believer. He is "delivered from the wrath to come," and entitled to eternal life. He still suffers from the effect of the storm, but has been saved from wreck; and even now, refitted, and becoming wiser by experience, he may put to sea again with more assured success. Fully recovered from his broken state of being, he shall shortly hear his God pronounce upon the "new creation," "It is very good;" and thus shall stand before him with everlasting acceptance.

In the mean time, regeneration must accompany our pardon. By this the fountain of those evils which destroyed the original goodness of man's person is cleansed. Otherwise, the guiltiness of an unregenerate state would continue to flow, and destructive condemnation would still follow as its consequence.

This goodness, indeed, substantially consists in renovation. For, without this all the noble faculties and affections of the soul are like so many sapless, lifeless roots; but when the Spirit of God strikes through them by his gracious power, then their spring-time is commenced, and a kindly vigour is imparted from them to all their stems and branches. The man now sweetly finds that all the laws and influences of the God of grace are congenial to his nature. He finds himself possessed of an affinity with God. Sin, as a dreadful pressure, is removed, and the soul regains something of her primitive elasticity and freedom. It is true, she has not received new faculties; but an entire new character and power are given to those which she possessed before. The tide of her affections is not dried up, but is completely turned. She is "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" and can shake the world's and satan's

fierce temptations from her, as "dew-drops from the lion's mane."

The great measure and model of our goodness, we have seen, is the Divine Nature. The rule of our proceedings in the attainment of this glorious image, and in our actions resulting from it, is "the law of the Lord," which "is perfect, converting the soul." There is much in this whole process which is purely the work of Omnipotence, without any concurring efficiency of ours, such as regeneration, and the shedding abroad of the perfect love of God in the heart; in which, at the moment, we are necessarily passive. But, on our part, all such blessings are received by faith, which is a sure trust and confidence in God that he will verify his promises respecting them, accompanied by a consequent and actual expectation and reception of them; and we can be active only, as to faith and holiness, by the written directions and indwelling Spirit of God. Thus "the man of God is perfect, furnished unto all good works;" and thus, in himself, by the influence and impress of the word, he "proves what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;" finds it excellently good in itself, acceptable to God as such, and admirably perfective of his nature.

And further: In this Book we are taught that the infernal poison, which destroyed the personal and moral goodness of the first man, and of all his posterity, may be completely removed by the blood of Christ, applied by faith. This blood "cleanseth from all sin." As a strong corrosive to a wound, or a medicine to the whole system, it detects it in its lurkings, and completely destroys it. Then the believer begins to live indeed; he regains the proper goodness of his nature, and begins to exert the vigorous powers of a healthful constitution.

The word of God also contains precepts for our guidance in all the walks of life: And as the law is good, and the subject good, obeying the commands of a Lawgiver who is infinitely good, the action must be good. Hence, we are told, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things." He shows "out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." Good works are really such, when they are conformed to the precept; when they flow from faith, or a principle of grace in the soul; when they are wrought in us by the Holy Spirit; and when the great end for which they are done is the glory of God. Whatever comes not up to these requisitions, is

either positively evil, because arising from the remains of evil in the heart; or "wood, hay, and stubble," which God can neither approve nor reward.

Having mentioned both the exemplar and the rule, we further observe, that the amount of Christian goodness must be proportioned to our capabilities. This is proved by the parable of the talents. Our goodness is neither to be the goodness of an angel, nor that of an inferior animal. A great divine says, "If I were a nightingale, I would sing like a nightingale; but as I am a man, I will praise my Maker." And how prodigious is the human capacity, especially when elevated by a strong faith, and "filled with all the fulness of God!" It is our privilege to husband and improve these resources to an inconceivable extent. Our blessed Lord has used the word "good" in some such sense as this: "The good part," which Mary chose, means "the best part." This sense is not only agreeable to the language employed by the evangelist, which expressed comparatives in this manner, but it also answers to the contrast between her part and that of Martha. For, the opposition is not between a good and a bad thing, but between a good and a better thing, that is the better of the two. Our goodness ought to exceed that of the faithful among the ancient Jews, as far as "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ" exceeds "the law of a carnal commandment." The good man "covets earnestly the best gifts;" for it is the nature of this goodness to amass its treasures, and to multiply itself, even to infinity.

But though we thus form scriptural conceptions of this goodness, yet the fact, that we ourselves possess it, can only be determined by an omniscient and infallible Judge. "The Spirit itself," not in the word, but in our hearts, must directly "witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." This is no deduction, either on our part, or that of the Spirit. It is a simple deposition, announcing the judgment of God in our case; and what that judgment is, He alone can know and declare. It lies deep in the Divine Mind, and not in Scripture; for our names are not there. Our reasoning on the nature, extent, and acceptability of our evangelical goodness, may or may not be correct; it may be, in many respects, defective and uncertain. How far must my experience go, and my good works be multiplied, before I can say, "This now is the decisive point; I am just now approved as good in the sight

of God?" Who will teach me to reason thus with certainty? And this view of the witness is no private fancy, but a doctrine very generally received, at least in former times, among the greatest and the best of Christians. As one proof out of many, we may observe, that the Independent churches of this country, during the Protectorate, published their "Confession of Faith" at the Savoy, signed by Dr. Owen, and many others, in which they declare, "This certainty is not a bare, conjectural, and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel; and also upon the inward evidence of those graces to which the promises are made; and on the immediate witness of the Spirit, testifying our adoption, and, as a fruit thereof, leaving the heart more humble and holy." "Testifying our adoption" is, by consequence, witnessing to the goodness of a justified and regenerate state.

The goodness which thus we are attempting to explain is answerable, in substance, to the obvious senses of the term "good," as first applied to the works of creation. The word may either imply, "fitness for an end," or "perfection," or "usefulness," or "beauty," or, perhaps, all these put together.

How fit this goodness is to attain a proper end, is clear from only a single species of it,—that of honesty. In this sense it is used where we read, "Some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people." Now, honesty, or faithfulness, as opposed to deception, is so fitted for its purpose, that even thieves demand it in their compacts with each other. But what surprising fitness is there in all the principles and parts of the Christian character, taken together, for the accomplishment of all its designs, especially its great scope, the advancement of the glory of God, and the happiness of man!

"Good fidelity," and "good conscience," are used in the sense of "perfect." The "good thing" of which the young man in the Gospel wished to be informed, was a "perfect thing," according to our Lord's answer; and that was to sell all, and follow Christ. But here, as in the works of creation when finished, every thing is perfect, or may be perfect in its kind, with the perfection which grace gives, and not with that of glory. Thus we read of "perfect love," "perfect works," and "perfect patience."

As to usefulness, who can estimate the "good things to

come," of which Christ was an High Priest? Among them the apostle mentions "the promise of eternal life,"—the sum and consummation of them all. And fruitfulness is profitable. This is another important sense of the word: The "good-ground" hearer brings forth "an hundred fold." And is not a benevolent, and kind, and gentle disposition most useful? "It blesses him that gives, and him that takes," to an incalculable degree. This sense of goodness is so infinitely important, that the attributes of Deity which answer to it are eminently called by this denomination, though, strictly speaking, all his perfections are good. Nay, the name "God" means "good;" for, though our Saxon ancestors were latterly idolaters, yet, in the early times of their history, they worshipped Jehovah under the name of *Gead*, which means *gude*, or "good." Such is the boundless emphasis of the term. And this goodness of the Christian is a fruit of the Spirit. In the same sense Barnabas is called "a good man," because he took a deep and lively interest in the welfare of the church.

And "whatever things are lovely," is an expression fully applicable to the moral beauty of the character we have endeavoured to describe; beauty truly rich and fascinating, particularly in the eye of his spiritual brother, who has a just discernment to perceive in him the genuine image of that God of whom the prophet said, "How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!"

But to goodness must be added perseverance; else, what will it avail in the day of eternity? This, also, is a scriptural and most important sense of the leading word in the text: "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; and a good man shall be satisfied from himself." "It is a good thing, that the heart be established with grace." And "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." But the converse of the proposition is equally true,—He that endureth not to the end shall be damned. "All his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."

Such is the man who is good in the sight of God. How different from him whom it is the custom of the world to call "good!" This name of God-like dignity is freely given to men, without the least reference to their conformity to the divinely-authoritative standard of goodness. Our own selfish,

sudden fancy is the rule. He who suits himself to our notions, or gives us pleasure, or who is not generous, but profuse, or who swears that he loves us, or who shows some occasional instinctive observance of what the world calls "morality," is, in the plenitude of our charity, pronounced to be "good," though his numerous violations both of the law and the Gospel are, probably, as evident as the sun at noon-day.

But he whom God approves exhibits in himself a concurrence of all the great principles to which we have adverted. He is restored to the favour of God: For, how can that man be good on whom God frowns because he is bad? He is a "new creature." "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." He is "holy as God is holy;" "perfect, as his Father which is in heaven is perfect." And he knows it, not merely by the conscious operation of the pure and powerful workings of "this newness of life," but with full and most transporting assurance from the inward testimony of the Spirit. His conduct, also, answers, as true as truth itself, to the nature and continuance of his internal state and character. As when the sun appears above the horizon, no pause ensues before he shows his brightness, and sends light upon the world; as when the steel is struck, the spark succeeds, without the delay of an instant; so the good man, from the moment of his heavenly birth, begins to breathe the air of Paradise, and gives the unequivocal and accumulating signs of the Divine life, in the exercise of its proper functions, and in the certain production of its appropriate effects.

II. We come now to the consideration of the gifts which, according to the text, God bestows upon the good man. These are "wisdom, and knowledge, and joy." They are termed "gifts," because, while in one view it is our duty to be wise, in another, which is the sense of the words here employed by Solomon, it is our true felicity to be so. This agrees with the grand design of the royal preacher, who purposes, throughout the book, to show in what true happiness consists. The gifts, indeed, are specified as the rewards of goodness, and as motives to it; for they are obviously distinguished from the character described.

Of these blessings wisdom is the chief. It is true, our happiness may seem to be the most important of all, because it is the end of which the others are the means; but by wisdom we

resemble God more nobly and eminently than in the consciousness of pleasure. And joy itself owes its whole excellence, its intensity, its perpetuity, to wisdom. It is neither the sensation of a gross and grovelling instinct, nor the pleasure of a mind perverted to levity and folly. It is the joy which results from the thought, and feeling, and action of a spirit sanctified and formed to a true resemblance of the Divine wisdom. It is the joy which knows itself, and can lessen or swell its tides at will, by reflection on all other objects; while the pleasure of the brute, or of the fool, is bound in by the narrow field of the senses. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: And with all thy getting get understanding." But to know the exact kind of wisdom mentioned in the text, it may be proper to make some observations on the subject in general.

Wisdom may, perhaps, be justly described, "the application of knowledge to an end;—a process of the mind in which, by means of the understanding, the will attains its object." This definition, without laying claim to perfect accuracy, will, in substance, accord with all the senses, good and bad, in which the word is used, both by the inspired writers, and by mankind at large. It also corresponds to the English word "wisdom," which means "the home or resting-place of knowledge." Wisdom, in the proper sense, is the right use of knowledge; in the improper sense, it is knowledge misapplied, or the "wisdom which is earthly, sensual, and devilish."

We may, then, conclude, that wisdom always has reference to mind, to moral consciousness, and to faculties strictly intellectual and active, whatever be the subject on which they are exercised. For, though wisdom is occasionally ascribed to animals, yet this can only be because they show some qualities which resemble human wisdom; or because instinct is the wisdom of God operating in the creature, which creature, in the mean time, knows not the source and character of the influence by which it is swayed. In the earliest ages the term "wise ones" was given, both among the Jews and Greeks, to builders, or artisans in general, long before the philosophers assumed that title.

But were the noble powers of man designed to be exclusively employed in such works as that of constructing brick and mortar, solely for his lower wants and curious fancies? The absurdity was felt; but neither the cause nor the cure of such an evil was

correctly understood. The knowledge of the true God was nearly gone from the earth. Man knew not the value of the treasure he had lost; knew not, in fact, that he had lost any thing. He knew, indeed, that he wanted much; but what it was he wanted he could not even imagine. Ignorant of the grand end of his existence, how should he understand by what precise means to attain it? Nature, in many ineffectual struggles for relief, turned her eye of contemplation, "in a fine frenzy rolling from earth to heaven, and then from heaven to earth." Man strove to trace the causes, to paint the characters, and to point out the purposes, of things. He studied the powers of language and of logic, and thus became an orator. He searched deep into the nature of the moral sense, and of the social compact. He employed the whole of his ingenuity in the acquisition of the good things of this life; and, as they gathered round him, would sometimes gratify his pride by a scornful rejection of the pleasures they proposed to him; and then would fiercely rush into the enjoyment of that which he knew would become still more poisonous and destructive by his own excesses. And now he thought he had obtained possession of the highest wisdom, and took to himself the homage which was alone due to his Maker; despising the vulgar herd of mankind, and boasting of his greatness, till death separated him from all his goods, and all his hopes.

But certain men arose who seemed to improve upon these methods. They taught, that wisdom consisted, not in idle disputation, but in the art of living well; and insisted on a practical conformity to the rules of virtue. This was, indeed, a very important distinction. For, the whole range of intellectual pursuits, apart from genuine virtue or holiness, is as distant from true wisdom, as the trifling art with which a child traces curious figures in the sand till interrupted by the dashing wave. The principle was good, but the application quite erroneous. They knew not what was virtue, nor how to acquire and practise it. Their doctrines were so absurd and contradictory, and their remaining vices so notorious and so numerous, that, instead of walking in the light of truth and wisdom, they evidently groped in palpable darkness; and, as in the case of Egypt, "the fear was more terrible than the darkness."

The reason of this is most obvious. When men forsake God, "the fountain of living waters," they have no other source of

instruction. The unity, the supremacy, the infinity of God remain; and, therefore, there is no other god to whom they can apply; though the senseless matter of the visible earth and heavens, and the human mind,—already corrupt, and which, indeed, is the very pupil to be taught,—and the devil himself, have all, in their turn, been resorted to as gods. What wisdom they have imparted to their worshippers, let the history of the world attest. Jehovah cries aloud, "Beside me there is no Saviour!" This is the sublime truth by which He is distinguished from all his creatures, as their only Teacher, Hope, and Refuge.

The first instance of this abandonment of God was a just but miserable specimen of what has since occurred in myriads of instances. Man would be wise above what God had revealed, and had restricted, as the limit of his knowledge; and all the parts of the attempt answered to the definition of wisdom, in the improper sense of the word. The knowledge he received from satan was false; and the more so, because it retained just so much of truth, real and apparent, as served to deceive; which has been the infernal wisdom of all corrupt churches and individual impostors ever since. The object was bad; for there was no imaginable reason, of a solid nature, why he should know evil, as God himself had no knowledge of it, that is, in the sense of experience; though the tempter had used an ambiguous expression on this point to seduce. And the means employed to effect the design,—a direct and deliberate act of disobedience to God,—was incomparably foolish, because it was wicked. Thus false knowledge, falsely applied, and for a false purpose, is the grand characteristic of the wisdom of this world. In every instance, one or more of these three circumstances will be found: Sometimes they all concur in the same transaction.

From this notorious example of false wisdom, which was the greatest folly possible, we may, judging by contraries, form some accurate conception of true wisdom. It must, then, be the accomplishment of a right end, by right means. But what these are, can only be learned from Divine authority; for man himself is so absolutely foolish, so far from his right mind, that is, insane, as not only to be utterly incompetent to teach, but even to learn it, without the light of Heaven directly shining on the subject, and the power of Omnipotence recovering his moral vision. The earliest information we have on this subject—

information at all professedly a distinct and full account of wisdom, and from which, no doubt, Solomon himself derived his definitions—is found in the book of Job: "Unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." A very ancient and not improbable tradition has affirmed, that the man to whom these words were first addressed was Adam; who, after the dreadful failure of his unlawful attempt to become wise, was thus encouragingly taught to retrace his steps, to "do his first works, and return to his first love;" supposing, of course, the doctrine of a Divine atonement to be revealed at the same time. The words are energetic and decisive. The meaning is, that among all the numerous kinds of wisdom which claim the attention of man, this alone is true, and deserving of the name. The relative or demonstrative pronoun is remarkably discriminating and emphatic. Wisdom in its proper sense is frequently applied in cases with regard to which the fear of God is not at all mentioned. But in all these instances it is included. They are all branches of the same great stock, in separation from which they wither and become dead.

As this wisdom meets the wants, so it suits the capacities, of all mankind. Infinitely more sublime than the sciences, it is yet more easily attained, consisting of few principles; but those of a character the most simple, and clear, and forcible. It consists of two things, stated by Solomon as containing the perfect essence and result of all his weighty and elaborate reasonings, of all his profound inspiration and experience. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Here principle and practice are inseparably connected. Here St. Paul and St. James, on the article of justification, are illustrated and harmonized; not by arguments, but by the actual fact of the case; which, with a language of its own, strikes the heart, and not the ear.

This fear begins in the tremendous truth that there is a God, the infinite Maker, sovereign Lord, and Judge of all men. It is strengthened by the consideration of his attributes, distinctly contemplated,—his majesty, his holiness, his goodness, and his truth; each of which imparts a peculiar modification to this fear, forming it to the character of a powerful and prevailing principle of action. But chiefly it is thus improved and heightened by

our relation to God as his children, reconciled and adopted through faith in the blood of atonement. It then becomes that fear which is a property of love; the sweet, the salutary fear which would not offend a good and a beloved Father, but gently constrains us to "walk before him unto all well-pleasing." It destroys all other fear that hath torment; and thus, while it originates in faith, re-acts with great power upon that most important grace, and fills the heart with such perfect confidenee, "that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Thus it works with full effect, terminating only in universal obedience to the commands of God; in reference to which Moses said to Israel, "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." This, then, is the chief wisdom referred to in the text,—true piety, the religion of a holy heart, and of a holy life.

Thus it is that "light is sown for the righteous;" who is "wise, and may be profitable to himself." For "godliness with contentment"—the godliness which gives contentment—"is great gain. It is in this view of usefulness, and not in its aspect of duty, as identified with goodness, that Solomon considers it. It was necessary, however, to say thus much by way of explanation, that we might not misapprehend it, as if it were something quite distinct from goodness; and that we might clearly trace its various kinds, as they branch out from it in their character as blessings.

The exact sense of Solomon appears to be, that, in addition to our happiness of secret communion with Himself, God will so bless and influence our piety as to make it the true and only source of "wisdom, and knowledge, and joy," in the acquisition and possession of all necessary temporal good things. It is piety alone which gives to these all the genuine interest of which they are capable; that subdues, as by a charm, the natural evil they contain; and that brings out all the proper kind of beauty and of profit which can possibly be elicited from their respective natures. In the absence of piety, all these—riches, honours, pleasures, science, courage, life itself, and the universal frame of things—are "vanity of vanities;" the vainest part of that which is vain, and "less than nothing." Let piety appear on

the horizon of this gloomy chaos, and darkness and confusion fly; all rises into grandeur; all has meaning, has an end, and is worthy of acceptance, as "from the hand of God."

It is very far from the intention of this philosophic preacher, to encourage either hopeless grief amidst the ills of life, or undue ardour and licentiousness in grasping its enjoyments. When he declares that all is vanity, his view is simply this,—that all is so without religion; for neither health nor wealth, nor this world in general, is vain to him who fears God; and what this royal philosopher has denounced as such, and as also vexatious, he elsewhere describes as good and solid, as the gift of God, and as highly deserving to be prized and enjoyed. His counsel, therefore, is, that we should be contented and happy with our portion of this life; not merely, nor even chiefly, because of the enjoyment arising from it, but because to do so is the dictate of wisdom, and an exercise of grateful obedience to God. At the same time, he advises to moderate the pleasure of possession by constantly reflecting that, in itself, our life is vain, that great uncertainty attends it; and that, in opposition to the stoical doctrine of apathy, its evils are not imaginary, but real, and must be endured. Opposite considerations were never more completely balanced. A finer point, or one of more importance in the science of life, was never reached, or attempted to be reached, by all the moral writers the world ever saw.

That this is a correct view of Ecclesiastes is clear from the consideration, that on any other principle the book abounds with contradictions which cannot possibly be reconciled. Complaints and congratulations every where succeed each other. The word "good" is used in two very different senses: "It is good and comely for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour." Of the very same thing, he observes in the same chapter, "When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, save the beholding of them with their eyes?" In one place mirth is ranked with madness and folly; in the text the word is rendered "joy;" and the thing itself is placed with wisdom and knowledge, and described as the gift of God to good men.

What is the cause of this amazing difference in the same subject? For "all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean." Religion, yes, religion, makes all

the difference; and nothing but religion. This, this alone is every thing; and all things else, apart from this, are nothing. This strips the world of its fictitious and destructive characters, and puts it in its own place; brings it down from the loftiness to which the libertine has raised it, or lifts it from the miserable degradation to which it is sunk by the senseless ingratitude of melancholy men.

Solomon has exemplified the wisdom of the text in the spirit and composition of this inspired book. For example: In the ninth chapter, he points out death, and its attendant evils, in colours of the deepest gloom; but just when the due impression is completed, and lest it should sink too deep into the heart, he strikes round with a sudden and surprising air of cheerfulness; and, prosecuting at some length fresh topics of the gayest character, he turns again to serious contemplations; thus keeping up the balance of his mind, agreeably to the dictates of the Holy Spirit, by whose wisdom he is taught. Happy had it been for Solomon, if he had uniformly verified this wisdom in his life!

But can it be that all, indeed, is vanity? even on the supposition that the fear of God is wanting. Is there no real difference between one enjoyment and another, or between enjoyment and its opposite? Yes, undoubtedly. But then it is in their comparison with each other, as limited in their nature, and temporal even in their utmost duration. Contrasted with all the infinite interests of the immortal man,—and this presents us with the only true scale of measurement,—they are absolutely nothing. They differ just as wind, or sand, or mortar, differs from each other, either as to kind or quantity. They are just so many degrees of vanity. One ray of light extends from the sun to the surface of the earth; another stretches down into the bottom of a well; but to an eye that could take in the whole, the difference would be lost. So is life compared with that interminable line of blessedness in which eternal life consists. If our present life be holy, then it is of importance, as the commencement of that line; as a point that multiplies itself unceasingly. If, on the contrary, our mortal state be sinful, it is no part of that line at all. But if it were, and could claim a character of real happiness, yet, as a point broken off, and which could not multiply itself, it would be absolutely nothing in the scale with immensity. This shows the admirable nature of the wisdom in the text, which would make life pass for neither more nor less than it is

worth; which equally reproaches the miser and the libertine, the frantic son of foolish laughter, and the sulky saint, whose sun is never seen to rise or set but behind the ever-thickening gloom of some cold and drizzling cloud.

The practical, prudential wisdom of the text is a gift from God; but always in conjunction with that more comprehensive wisdom which consists in true religion. The one differs from the other as the cause from its effect. One is the genus, and the other is the species. True prudence in the affairs of life cannot exist without religion; but the latter may be found where there is comparatively little of the former; because most Christians live at once too far below their duty and their privileges, very much to the discredit of the principles they profess, and to the very great injury of their own peace and comfort. The tearing of a garment, or the breaking of some trifling vessel, shall frequently embitter for the time all the enjoyments they possess, and place a painful guiltiness between their God and them.

Here their prudence fails, in particular instances, because due attention is not paid to that wisdom of true piety which is the only foundation of the whole. If this be maintained, God will often grant, in addition to it, the gift of special skill, and readiness, and power, as to the management of individual cases. In these the good man will be divinely directed to choose a good end, and good means to accomplish it; and to select the very best of ends and instruments when a variety of these are presented to the mind. He has wisdom to acquire, knowledge to employ, contentment to possess, the good things of this life. He pursues the best, expects the worst, and joyfully and thankfully gives God praise for both. It is, therefore, much to be regretted, that "the children of this world" should be "wiser than the children of light;" that the latter, in the application of means to a good end should not be equally prompt and vigorous with the former in their prosecution of a sinful end.

Knowledge is the second gift, which, according to the text, God bestows on good men. This teaches what ought to be done, and what ought to be left undone. Then wisdom strikes in with her skill and science, with the "spirit of love, and power, and of a sound mind," to instruct us how to act.

Right knowledge has truth and certainty for its foundation. Without these it is mere opinion, and may possibly deceive us.

Hence the matchless value of the Holy Scriptures, where all imaginable subjects of essential interest to mankind are successively presented in a just and powerful light. The several characters of those subjects, and the practical decisions respecting them, are pronounced by an infallible Judge; and need not, therefore, to be worked out by the laborious and uncertain process of our own darkling minds. Here is rock to support and justify our strongest confidence. Free from doubt, the mind has nothing to divide her attention, and paralyze her powers; but may fix her whole intensity on the nature and value of the truths which she contemplates. Truth alone is knowledge; and he alone discovers it, who, instead of conjectures, presents us with demonstrations; which is the character of all decisions issuing from Divine authority. But without a firm faith in that which is revealed, we shall just be as uncertain and as unsuccessful in all our attempts to reap the benefit of truth, as if revelation were entirely false, and our faith strong and confident. Where these two conditions meet, our knowledge is much more than speculation. The truth is not only seen, but, so to speak, it is touched and tasted by the mind. Mere speculation says of any given truth, "I believe it to be true." But if the thing in question have been a matter which we ourselves have experienced, we say, "I know it to be true." This distinction has been observed by men in every age of the world. The earliest writers used the words "wisdom" and "knowledge" in the sense of an impressive and practical perception. A very old author says, "I taste my business:" Meaning to say, "I understand my business." So it is with the believer. He has "his senses exercised to discern both good and evil." The truth exhibits both; but he loves the one, and hates the other, in proportion as he perceives the first is sweet, and the other bitter. In this respect, and by the realizing power of faith, he has "tasted that the Lord is gracious."

Now, he who thus knows Christ, that is, who feels the saving power of his death and resurrection, gives to all other kinds of knowledge their proper rank and value. Compared with this, whatever gain may be attached to them by common estimation, he "counts them but loss." This places worldly riches, honours, pleasures, in shade and insignificance. This knowledge is the rule by which they are measured; the scale in which they are weighed. And as thus his judgment of them is corrected, so

his affection for them is proportionably adapted. Formerly they absorbed the whole intensity of his soul, and Christ was not known as an object of any great worth. But the case is now reversed; and this knowledge of the things themselves suggests the exact degree of attention which is proper in the application of them.

He, therefore, and he only, has the right use of life who has the right knowledge of it. This is a general principle, which even the wisdom of this world must admit. And such is the gift, which none but God can give, for our perfect guidance and enjoyment, amidst the good and evil things of this transitory state. The knowledge mentioned in the text is not, in strictness of interpretation, the knowledge of Christ crucified. It is, properly, that knowledge of our portion in this world which is necessary to the highest possible enjoyment of life. But the latter cannot exist without the former. The first is the fountain, and the second is the stream. The sole supply of the one is received from the ever-flowing spring of the other. When thus combined, the harmony is most sweet and healing. "Godliness with contentment is great gain;" but "what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

And he who knows, that is, who feels, his sins forgiven; who "knows the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;"—this love being powerfully "shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost," producing there the deep and delightful conviction that God loves him, and has entitled him to be filled, even now, "with all the fulness of God;"—he whose knowledge is of this transforming, this transporting character, needs not have any anxious recourse to the scanty, muddy, poisoned rivulets of earthly knowledge. Again: True knowledge is the knowledge of all the truths with which we are acquainted, in their frame and connexion, in their nature and comparison. Now, enough of this is given, or may be given, to every child of God, to impress him with a practical sense of the mighty difference that subsists between "the things of God," and the things of time and sense.

What has been said of wisdom, and of knowledge, will apply with equal force to joy; namely, that nothing of the kind is true and proper, connected with our earthly possessions, which flows not from religion.

The seat of joy is in the mind. Gladness is the sensible delight which we take in outward things; and may be the portion

of the wicked, as well as of the righteous. Thus God filled the hearts of idolaters "with food and gladness;" not with food and joy. But the joys of the mind are sometimes false; such as those of study and refinement, unqualified by grace: For these, though comparatively noble, are, in all essential points, upon a level with the lowest pleasures. They are embittered from many considerations, to which, indeed, they themselves give an additional pungency.

True joy is from the Holy Ghost, and is consequent upon righteousness and peace, received in our justification. It is also in proportion, both as to quality and degree, to the fruit which we bear. Here, the sweetness of the fruit is not the portion of the husbandman;—in his vineyard he is "glorified," not profited;—it redounds to the tree itself; to every stem of which the Holy Ghost has given life, and sense, and taste. Even his "yoke is sweet," as an ancient version reads the passage. This joy arises also from the certain hope of eternal life; and, from all these considerations, it may well be described as "joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

Now, is it possible, that joy like this, when raised to the pitch of our Christian privilege, should not counterpoise all the sinful pleasures and distracting pains of the present life; and give a magnanimity and fortitude which nothing else could give? When the good man is deprived of the narrow streams of created happiness, shall he complain, while permitted to bathe in that Fountain which contains all the comfort of those streams; and that contains them in a manner more excellent than can be found in them; and is, indeed, far more communicable than finite goodness can be? And when those temporal means of happiness are granted, can the joyful possessor wickedly pervert them to the grief and dishonour of his Divine Benefactor? Will not his temperate and thankful use of them bring out the whole of their sweetness? And must not their value be inconceivably enhanced from the consideration, that they are His gifts; and that, while we enjoy them, He himself is smiling upon us as his beloved children, and is blessing them abundantly in order to our happiness? Thus, to the man of God, the beauty of the plains, the grandeur of the mountains, and the glories of the sky, are eminently heightened by the presence and the love of their infinite Creator.

Such are the gifts which God bestows on him who is good in

his sight. As the goodness of the man himself is recovered by the Holy Spirit, it is in beautiful harmony with the design of the Gospel that, in some proper sense, the goodness of the creatures should also be restored to him. And this, we have seen, arises not so much from any power exercised on nature to remove its barrenness, and all the other evils occasioned by the curse, as from the extraordinary excellence and commanding influence of the gifts connected with them; gifts which either more than supply the absence of the creatures, or mould them, when possessed, to the very wish of the possessor. It is true, they are vanity; but the art of enjoying them lies much in the perfect knowledge of this circumstance. The gifts contain in themselves the seeds of all true happiness; and deserve the name of "good things" infinitely more than worldly pleasures, wealth, and honours. They include, in their kind, all the properties of goodness, answerable to those we have seen in the moral goodness of him to whom they belong. They are admirably fitted to accomplish every reasonable and valuable end. Nay, they are themselves the end of our existence. For what can any one desire more than to be happy? Still, if through long custom we desire to have more than all; to have means in addition,—as if the end, when fully gained, were defective without them;—even then the gifts may be found to contain them in their highest perfection. Hence, according to Solomon, wisdom, for example, gives wealth, honour, pleasure, strength, beauty, safety, and an eternity of all these.

For perfect evidence of what we have advanced on the tendency of "wisdom, knowledge, and joy," taken in their high and spiritual sense, to promote the greatest possible enjoyment of temporal possessions, we might appeal to the nature of these gifts themselves, submitted to the scrutiny of any candid reasoner; to Providence at large,—for the history of the wicked concurs with that of the righteous, to prove the same great truth; and to the whole volume of Divine revelation. Many texts point out, professedly and expressly, the direct bearing of religion on the temporal state of Christians; others describe the gifts in question so fully and so glowingly as to show that, where they are possessed, they must predominate, and give more than a tinge of their own celestial character to the whole of the sublunary state and scenery through which the traveller is hastening to his home.

How beautifully wisdom and its tendency are described by

St. James! "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, than peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

On the knowledge of God, how strong is the language of inspiration! "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

As to spiritual joy, how pathetic, how graphical, is the following illustration! "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: Then said they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

III. The connexion that subsists between the goodness and the gifts, is the last part of the subject which we proposed to consider.

That he who is good in the sight of God shall certainly receive "wisdom, and knowledge, and joy," is a truth which in a moment may, by pure authority, command our firm conviction. But shall we inquire no further? Is it frivolous, and indicative of doubtfulness, to examine the grounds on which it rests? Is it a matter of indifference to trace the footsteps of the Almighty, and to "vindicate the ways of God to man?" It deserves our careful observation, that such inquiries are not only a sublime and delightful exercise of the understanding, and greatly contribute to the strengthening of our faith, but that also, in the

present instance, they are absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of the connexion. For, God imparts the gifts not at random, or in the manner we may think most proper, but agreeably to certain methods, appointed by his own "godly wisdom;" and to know these, is requisite, that we may be prepared to act accordingly. It is a part, indeed, of the goodness to which the gifts are promised, to be versed in the scriptural and true doctrine of their actual communication.

When the blessings mentioned in the text are named as gifts from God, the meaning is, that they are the effects of his peculiar love and favour; not bounties of a general character, scattered by the hand of the common Parent of mankind, "who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good." They are blessings strictly appropriate to the character and state of his own adopted children; and, therefore, of the highest value, spiritual and Divine. For though they relate to the right and full enjoyment of the present life, yet they necessarily imply that treatment of it which is properly religious. The gifts in question, therefore, must be obtained from God alone. Human nature has them not, education cannot generate them, nor can the whole course of God's ordinary providence supply them. The highest reason of worldly men is not only destitute of such admirable qualifications, but absolutely rejects them, though offered by the hand of God. "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God." The apostle does not say "a carnal man, a man led by the affections of the flesh," but "an animal man, one swayed by the soul," that is, by natural reason cultivated probably to the last degree of perfection. To him those things are "foolishness," because to be approved they must be spiritually discerned; and this discernment no force of the natural mind, or learning, or genius, can impart. Whence, then, can we derive such blessings, but from God? They are "a pure emanation from the glory of the Almighty;" and, in this instance, it may most emphatically be asserted, that "a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." The question now is, How, and in what way, has God established the connexion between the character and its consequences?

We may observe, in the first place, that he has so ordered this important matter, as to communicate the gifts through the medium of that very goodness to which they are promised. They grow out of its constitution and essence. Their seeds

were mixed up with its substance in its original formation; and now they flourish in their native soil, and "bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold."

Nay, this goodness is itself a very important instance of wisdom. Is it not the greatest wisdom "to flee from the wrath to come?" and to aspire to all the happiness and glory which God himself can give? The same may be observed of knowledge. If goodness, simply considered, and in the moment of conversion, be not the noon-tide of that knowledge which alone is bright and blessed, it is undoubtedly its dawn; of the same Divine character with that of the meridian. And while this goodness forms the heart to happiness, true pleasure springs up instantly within, and, meeting many kindred streams from without, imparts to each its own more pure and joyous qualities. Thus the goodness and the gifts are co-incident and parallel; as inseparable as sound and melody in well-composed and well-executed music. So far as any man is truly good, so far he is truly wise, and intelligent, and happy; and where goodness ceases to extend itself, there also is the boundary of his wisdom, knowledge, and joy.

Nor is this at variance with the fact, that many Christians are imprudent in some instances; for, imprudence as completely violates the principle of goodness in such particular instances, as it destroys their claim to the success which might otherwise attend them. Devotedness to God, humility, and a teachable and modest disposition, will prevent the good man from going out of his own proper sphere; and where these are maintained and acted on, even his failures, as perhaps he may term them, will redound to his advantage.

Neither must this oneness between the character and its privileges be viewed as inconsistent with the phraseology of the text, by which the things appear to be distinguished; as if the goodness first existed, and the gifts were afterwards bestowed, but of a nature wholly different. The truth is, God gives both; and in giving goodness he may be said to give its consequences, by infusing that into its essential character which should necessarily produce them. Of course, it is equally correct to say, that, in giving these, he gives them through the medium of this goodness. Thus God is said to give us "fruitful seasons;" for the earth, and sun, and rain, are but the channels of his power and bounty. He gave them their respective natures, and still

makes them operative in the production of their several effects. So in higher matters: "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." The first shall, hereafter, of the flesh, "out of this very seed," as Mr. Wesley expounds it, "reap death everlasting." The latter, according to another, but equally certain and invariable, constitution of things, shall reap the contrary harvest. Still, true it is, that "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Here, then, is the first reception from God of essential wisdom, in conforming to the character which the text describes. The knowledge of this fact is given by the Spirit's witness to our adoption, which adoption comprises the whole state and frame of spiritual goodness. And, lastly, the joy that springs from both completes this commencement of the Christian life. But all these instantly go on, and continue to multiply themselves, as both the spiritual and temporal concerns of the good man may require. They are main boughs of the stock; but they likewise have their branches; these branches have their scions, and all of them their fruit. Virtue is itself, according to ancient definitions, "the art of living justly and happily;" and the English word "art" is said, on this account, to have been derived from the original term "virtue." Thus goodness, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy, are all infolded in each other; are all sweetly combined together; as air, and light, and electricity, and gravitation, are all mutually embraced and diffused in the same identical atmosphere.

This union is still further shown and strengthened by the tendency of each of the principles to establish and increase the rest. Goodness produces wisdom; it tends to perfect the understanding; receives the true light in embracing revelation; promotes the industry of study; and, by an instinct of its own, aims always at the best ends, and seizes on the best means for their accomplishment. Wisdom, on the other hand, produces goodness. One part of wisdom is to cultivate the goodness from which it sprung. This answers to the advice of the apostle: "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." By knowledge we are enabled to apply our principles of wisdom, and a wise man will constantly enlarge his sphere of knowledge. All these produce that joy which is their own refreshing element; the food and medicine attendant on all their operations. The more we taste the more we know, the

more we know the more we love, the more we love the more we grasp at the attainment of our object; and thus the good man runs the endless career of tasting, knowing, loving, and pursuing, and finds the circle to grow wider, and yet wider still, in proportion as he rounds it. Thus wisdom is her own reward; and this is further accumulated by the existence of her own proper being: "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein." "The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge."

But we observe especially, in the second place, that God bestows the gifts of the text more directly from himself; by the influence of his Spirit on the human soul; by supplying them immediately on some extraordinary occasions; by rapidly maturing them, considered as the proper fruit of goodness; and by governing the events of Providence particularly in their favour.

We are sensible that on this doctrine of a Divine interference with the frame of nature, very opposite opinions are espoused by many persons. Some wholly renounce it, as unnecessary, and inconsistent with that perfection which we may presume would mark the works of God. Others take it in a sense the most unqualified, as implying nothing less than a succession of miracles, strictly so called, in which the laws of nature are sometimes completely counteracted or suspended. The truth, we conceive, lies between these two extremes. We believe there is a special providence in which God effects his purposes, by ruling, or managing, or bending, the several parts of his creation, agreeably to their natures, and not by subverting their essential laws and properties. We except the work of grace upon the heart, which, in a certain sense, is undoubtedly miraculous.

There is no evidence that God designed creation to go on without any interference on his part, as Governor. Had there been such a design, and the work had failed to answer its intention without the supernumerary touches of his own finger, then the objection just named would have some weight. But if it be more glorious—and we think this could be proved from several considerations—that God should mingle with his works, and govern them, than that he should simply behold them acting wholly and exclusively according to created influences, it will follow, that our doctrine is far from being dishonourable to the perfections of Deity.

For this doctrine we have not only the current language of

Scripture, which attributes the effects and even the operations of nature to God; but the subject bears its own evidence and illustration in the workings of his providence, and the experience of mankind. This, perhaps, will appear by the following explanation.

Nature, in some instances, is of a fixed and unalterable character; as is evident from the uniform laws and motions of the planets. In others, she is flexible, and capable of variation. Of these we may mention the human mind, bodily health, and the weather. Thus nature, as a whole, may be compared to a tower surmounted by a flag. The massive building stands fixed, but the colours are ever movable at the option of the wind. Each of these two divisions has its own appropriate uses. It is advantageous that the tower should constantly maintain its firmness; and it is to be wished, for proper reasons, that the ensigns should flutter to the breeze, and veer from point to point. Nor do we look that either of the two should interfere with the specific character and purposes of the other; that the foundations should fly along the air, and that the light pennant should defy the gale, and hang motionless upon the staff.

Just so in Providence. Those materials which are wielded at the will of man, but more especially at the will of God, and which, by this kind of sway, are not driven from their natures, as the earth would be if retarded either in her annual or diurnal motion, are very numerous, and no doubt quite sufficient, as instruments of providential government. The combinations, and varieties, and energies of which they are capable, are utterly beyond conception. If a very few simple tones in music can be managed so as to produce an infinity of new effects, what shall be said of the boundless materials in question, and those, too, in the hands of Him, the resources of whose power and wisdom are absolutely inexhaustible?

If we can move the mind of another by sympathy, or by putting a book in his way, shall we deny that God either can or does effect his purposes by similar means, by exciting certain thoughts, and producing fit conjunctures of affairs in his providence? If man can even, to some extent, affect the weather in his favour; can furnish out an atmosphere of his own, and give it just the temperature he pleases, improving the quality and accelerating the maturity of his fruits; shall the same power be denied to the Governor of all worlds? And should it be observed, that still our doctrine supposes such an arrangement and operation of the variable parts of nature as would not be

found to exist, if things were left untouched by the Deity, we admit the observation. What then? Do you call the touch referred to absolutely miraculous? To this we cannot possibly object, provided the sense of the term be understood, and not confounded with that sense of the word in which our Lord worked miracles. The upholding and the wheeling of the celestial orbs for a single day is one of the greatest miracles that can well be conceived; but as to the mode of operation, as resulting from the power of God, it is no more miraculous than the falling of a leaf. It is neither miraculous for man to build a house, nor for God to blow it down by an act of his special interference. The distinction we have made between the unalterable and the variable parts of nature is clearly recognised by thousands of mankind, who never think of the theory it involves. For example: We pray with earnestness and hope for the recovery of a sick friend, while we judge it possible that means employed for this purpose may be blessed, and be successful. When nature is supposed to sink below a certain pitch, or when the man is dead, our prayers for health are at an end. In a storm, a merchant on the beach beholds his labouring bark, and beseeches God to save her; but when at last he sees her many shivers floating round the rock, he does not pray that God would restore them to a perfect vessel. The truth is, that could not be done without a proper miracle; and on the other hand, if there be not that Divine movement upon variable nature to which we have adverted, we ask, Why pray at all?

There is one proof drawn from Scripture which we think is very strong. It is this. "When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray towards this place, &c. send rain upon thy land." When a man commits a crime, and feels the pain of remorse, we are not surprised, for the one is the natural consequence of the other; but what connexion there is between the sins of a nation and a dry state of the atmosphere, we cannot imagine, except that which results from the special providence of God. Surely it will not be said, that in this particular, as well as in many others, the case of the Jews was peculiar and miraculous; for should Europe be afflicted with a great and universal famine, the popular sense of the inhabitants would concur with that of the refined and philosophic governors, to acknowledge, in the observance of their public fasts, the special character of the punishment, and their hope of a special interference to remove it.

The consequence, we think, is clear, that God "gives wisdom,

and knowledge, and joy," not merely as coming through the goodness of the character, but by other methods, which still more strictly and emphatically point them out as gifts. And very great human authority confirms this most delightful doctrine. We shall only give one instance,—that of Dr. Thomas Jackson, vicar of Newcastle-upon-Tyne; in our judgment one of the profoundest writers of the seventeenth century. This able scholar says, "The principles of any science become manifest and certain to us, either by our own industry, or the teaching of others; or we are taught them immediately from God, either by the admirable disposition of His extraordinary providence, or by special infused grace. I make no question but the principles of some other sciences besides divinity, at least some principles of such sciences, have been immediately taught by God; or, if any man list to controvert this truth, I could entertain many Heathen advocates for my opinion, without any great cost or pains." What is here admitted in regard to human science will apply with incalculably greater force to the spiritual and providential dealings of God with his people, in constantly supplying them with the three important gifts in question, and in suiting the varieties of these gifts to their characters and wants.

We observe, in the third place, that, notwithstanding the connexion between the goodness and the gifts is founded on the special grace and providence of God, yet we must use certain means in order to its accomplishment. God himself employs means in the communication of his benefits, even when he varies from his ordinary rule of government; man must also have recourse to means in order to receive them. Both these kinds of means are often necessary to effect the ends intended.

God saves no man from shipwreck by transporting the vessel, in an instant, right out of winds and waves, to the calm and safety of some distant haven. Nor must the pilot, while he prays that God would grant the favour, even, as we have said, of his special interference, relax for one moment the exercise of his skill. This attention to duty is frequently an essential part of the means by which God displays that very Providence which we justly designate "particular and extraordinary." If the object cannot be obtained without a proper miracle, it cannot be obtained at all. The tower and its flag should not be expected to exchange their respective offices. A gentle motion of the air is all that is wanted to answer the legitimate purposes of the latter; a hurricane is not sufficient to demolish the foundations of the former.

Nor, on the other hand, ought we to look for the same uniformity and certainty of character and effect from what is weak and wavering, which we know to belong to the massive walls of a castle. Our business, therefore, is to adjust the yielding streamer: To seek our object by attempting to push the ponderous building, or expecting some angelic power to push it for us, would be just as unnecessary as it would be futile and ridiculous. We ought to seek no end but such as can be answered by the light materials and the wind, and these, too, subjected to our attentive management: With the moveless tower we have no concern.

This doctrine of even the laborious use of means to procure what is notwithstanding justly termed "a gift," shines out in every page of Scripture. The two things are often prominently marked as distinct, and yet combined in the same transaction. "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God; for the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." These sentiments of Solomon are more briefly and definitely urged by St. James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

But prayer and faith are not the only means to obtain either wisdom, or knowledge, or joy. We must inquire, and read, and think, and use every just expedient, with incessant diligence and application. The Heathens trusted much to Fortune, and when proceeding to erect a house or temple, would implore her assistance; yet they never thought that she would shape and rear the rough materials into a perfect building without their own co-operation. "Even Solomon," as Dr. Isaac Barrow says, "first gave his heart to wisdom, before it was given into his heart. He did not gape to receive it by mere infusion, but worked and studied hard for it." And the means to acquire it, in that high sense of it which includes true wisdom in all its branches, are perfectly within the reach of the most unlearned Christian. Of these, as we have said, the chief are faith, and prayer, and meditation. The greatest doctors in divinity know nothing savingly and truly but what they learn precisely in this humble way, and

are in this respect upon a level with the meanest peasant. But often when these means are used, something like infusion follows; and the great truths of Christianity,—the saving doctrines of the cross,—when written on the heart by the finger of the Holy Ghost, shall elevate the soul, in a moment, to that very pitch of happiness at which angels themselves would desire to arrive, were they incarnated among us. And then, with equal promptness and directness, God may give relief and prosperity in temporal affairs.

The use of means to secure a right enjoyment of life is particularly necessary. The various cases of great difficulty as to management of attractive temptation, and of repulsive interruption, demand much thoughtfulness, much cautious reasoning, much teachable and humble reference to the counsels of those who are distinguished for wisdom, piety, and experience. If to all these measures we often add a direct appeal to God for the guidance of his providence and Holy Spirit, we shall, no doubt, quickly realize the gifts of the text, sometimes before we are aware, and sometimes in a manner the most satisfactory and striking. The use of means, indeed, as we have already shown, is an essential exercise of the goodness to which the blessings are annexed. If means, then, be at any time renounced or despised, the promise is not binding in that particular instance; and thus we sometimes suffer loss, both as to our spiritual and temporal possessions, entirely through our own fault; perhaps through idle inattention, or the hasty seizure of some prejudiced or unsanctified opinion, in which may be seen great self-sufficiency, but nothing wise, or good, or strong, or holy. Still the faithfulness and kindness of the Promiser remain indisputable.

We have now attempted to describe both the goodness and the gifts to which Solomon, throughout his writings, has attached such high importance. This we have done with constant reference to scriptural authority, and in the light and evidence of the subjects themselves. For no subjects have been more steadily held up to view in the experience of ages, or have more abundantly justified the authoritative declarations of their value, than those of which we have been treating.

Yet the form of this treatment—not that of mere reflection, but of regular discussion—may, we fear, demand apology; but this discourse, with the exception of the first part, having never been addressed from the pulpit, it was judged that such reasonings might not be altogether unsuited to instruction, when submitted to the deliberate examination of a reader. The nature of

the inquiry may further plead some excuse for its length. It would not now be very consistent, however, to give it still more the appearance of a treatise by adding much to its size. The observations of improvement, to which the whole subject leads, are numerous, and capable of useful expansion. We suggest a few of these, which the reader may enlarge to his own satisfaction.

Do we resume the consideration of scriptural goodness? What subject upon earth is even of equal importance? Then how necessary it is to avoid erroneous, and to form just and elevated, views of it! Goodness, as we have seen, is only another word for holiness, or piety, or "pure and undefiled religion;" and how fully, how minutely, is it described, how precisely distinguished from all delusive forms of it, in the very copious revelations of Him who is the only authoritative Judge concerning it! Let us dearly prize the perfect rule of Divine truth.

False notions here are dangerous in the extreme. How common is it, for example, to presume on the sufficiency of some inferior mixtures of goodness, conquered and depressed by a great weight of sinfulness! If a man commits murder with a degree of unwillingness, is the action good because the hesitation was such? But even this reluctance falls short of spiritual goodness. And may one be constituted good merely from a few valuable actions of his life? Must he who only makes a voyage or two be truly termed a "mariner?" Why are the wicked called "workers of iniquity," but because it is their trade, their prevailing practice, and that in which they are accomplished? And so of those who serve God.

We have shown, that goodness is a thing Divine; of powerful qualities, and of vast extent; the complexion of the whole man, and deeply radicated in the character; that it comes by a mighty change upon the mind, which is properly, and not metaphorically, termed a "new creature," a "new birth," a "resurrection from the dead;" and that the subject of so great a change can no more be ignorant of the fact than of his perfect recovery from some dreadful bodily disease. Is this precisely the goodness to which we aspire? And have we received it to the full extent of our privilege? or is it known to us at all? Are we, indeed, total strangers to it? Then, with all pretences to the contrary, we are strangers to happiness. We must know what is truly good in the sense of character, before we can permanently taste what is truly good in the sense of enjoyment. O with what supreme and instant anxiety ought we to grasp at the possession of the former! we could not then fail to be satiated with

the latter. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you."

But this order is completely reversed by the world. Our cry through life is, "Who will show me any good?" and, then, at death, we faintly say, or horridly exclaim, "Who will make me good?" We attempt to finish before we lay the foundation. We rear a foolish apparatus ; and, elevating our materials to the clouds, we begin to erect the turrets of our purposed mansion, having not the least patience previously to build the walls. And, having placed a stone, as we presume, in its position, down it sinks upon the ground. Not discouraged, we project another, and another, till the earth is literally heaped with the demonstrations of our madness and misery. And what is still more wonderful, multitudes behold this folly, and deride it, and retire, and endlessly repeat the very same experiment. Yet, in the estimation of fallen man, this is wisdom, this is knowledge, this is joy. Such is his intellectual dignity.

Young persons, in particular, are apt to err with a folly thus palpably gross. Joy, which is the last in the enumeration of the text, with them is the first great object of attainment. They would leap to the goal at once, disdaining to traverse the intermediate ground in any regular way. O that they would begin with goodness! Then, and not till then, should they so run as to obtain. Then the race itself would be a noble and delightful exercise of their powers. Life then could not disappoint them, as now it does great multitudes. On the contrary, it would be, indeed, a sweet enjoyment, in connexion with the more exalted privileges of that inward kingdom which consists in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "O taste and see that the Lord is good ; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints ; for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger ; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

And as the goodness which the text recommends leads to all the valuable attainments which man can possibly enjoy, both in time and eternity, the most certain, the most summary, the most illustrious exercise of benevolence is, to promote it in our families, among our friends and countrymen, and throughout the world, by extending "the knowledge of Christ, and him crucified." By properly and fixedly attending to this one point, we quickly gain all the rest. Only teach your child to fear God, and his fortune is already made.

We further learn from our subject, that wisdom and wickedness have no alliance with each other. Although we may learn instruction from sin, when rightly considered, as an object unavoidably pressed on our attention; yet nothing is more dangerous, or foolish, or abominable, than to disobey God, that we may become more knowing; that we may be assured, for example, whether, in opposition to his word, there may not, after all, be real happiness in the practice of iniquity. Nor can any act of sin be, in any proper sense, an act of prudence, or of profit. The common maxim, that "what is morally wrong cannot be politically right," is a truth as firm and unremovable as the pillars of heaven and earth. The Spanish proverb is its own demonstration, that "nothing is got by thieving," and that "nothing is lost by praying." If young people only formed a proper judgment of this doctrine, their very love of pleasure would deter them from committing sin. There is nothing in the universe half so sweet as the love of Jesus.

Again: We have seen, from the general truth contained in the text, that true religion most admirably regulates the intercourse between us and the creature. The creature is one source of our most powerful temptations. In proportion, then, as we find ourselves closely mingled up with nature, whether by enjoyment, on the one hand, or by suffering, on the other, we require the force of faith, and love, and hope, to effect a due separation of the mind and affections from it.

Are you opulent? You are so much the more in danger. Wealth surrounds you as a magic circle, in which you find it very difficult to be master of yourself. If you have little or none of "the love of the Father," you are sincerely to be pitied. The situation you occupy requires no common share of wisdom and knowledge. It is probable you are strongly tempted either to extravagance or to a worldly disposition. Followed by a crowd of mendicants and others, who would strip you of your property, you are obliged to be very cautious in your management. That caution must be carefully watched, lest it turn to covetousness. It may tend, in connexion with the tendency of riches in general, to freeze the feeling of benevolence, which ought to have its influence no less than the principle. Hence the common observation, "He has done many good actions, but never did a generous one;" that is to say, "He has the calculating conscience of the case, but wants the palpitating sympathy,"—the heart that answers to the counsel of St. Paul:

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice; and weep with them that weep."

You are particularly in danger from the deceitfulness of riches. If you be touched with this unhappy spell, you can scarce believe you are rich. The love of the world you are disposed to call, not only by the names of "prudence, and the care of a family," but also by many of the titles of absolute piety. And the greatest danger of all, in such a case as this, arises from an obstinate unwillingness to be told the truth concerning it; a kind of moral incapacity of being convicted on this particular subject. You are candid and open on many other points; you admit the danger of riches; and that some rich people are covetous; but this, you are sure, does not at all apply to you. Hence the extreme difficulty of preaching on an evil so insidious. Hence its frequent and powerful mention in the New Testament. Hence Timothy, though young in years, and, probably, a poor man, was bound to "charge them that were rich in this world," on the very serious duties and dangers of their station.

"Goodness, and wisdom, and knowledge," alone can secure the heart in all these hazards, and draw forth all the genuine joy peculiar to wealth. The sin of the case lies, not in riches, but in the love of them, in the desire and passion for them. The description is, "They that will," that is, simply wish to "be rich," not they that are rich; for, riches of this world may increase, and the heart be set, not on them, but on the "true riches." In this case, the man of wealth possesses "wisdom, knowledge, and joy," in connexion with the good things of this life; and fails not to make "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." A person of this character is a noble example of the rational and religious enjoyment of the present transitory state, and deserving of all possible regard, as an ornament of human nature, and a blessing to mankind.

But, perhaps, you are in a state of poverty and distress. If so, your temptations, though altogether different from those we have just been mentioning, are also very powerful, and require an extraordinary degree both of goodness and of wisdom to support and improve them. Religion can preserve you from adding pungency to pain, by fretful and impatient struggles to relieve it. It will teach you not to envy the rich, but to respect them; to rejoice in their prosperity; and even, when they oppress you, to pray that God would still increase their stores. if he see this to be proper to promote their welfare. This conduct

will open a secret spring of joy in your heart worth all the wealth which they possess. Religion will furnish you with the best expedients possible for the amendment of your circumstances; will supply you with the sweetest consolations; and will enable you to seize on all the advantages which, perhaps, lie plentifully concealed, even in your low condition.

You may not be able to command riches. Remember, however, that they are only professed to be the means of happiness; and so long as they remain unapplied to their purpose, they are just about as valuable as so many straws or pebbles. But you may have the end without the means. "Wisdom, and knowledge, and joy" are pressed on your acceptance. These are far above "uncertain riches;" are more congenial to the renovated nature of man; more portable than parks and palaces, because they are within you, and are parts of your living self; more purely delightful; more ecstatical, and, withal, more certain and endurable.

Why envy, then, the miserable sons of folly and impiety, because of the gilding of their extrinsical condition? You have a noble existence still continued to you. "The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." Nor is this all. Even the lower blessings of your life declare the "lovingkindness of the Lord." On you the sun spreads out his rays, and the fields breathe forth their sweets. For you the vales and woods pour many a thrilling strain of music, furnished for you by your heavenly Father, who feeds the happy creatures who are the instruments of your joy.

But, infinitely above all these, to you the holy sabbath returns, the throne of grace is accessible, and the book of God unfolds its brightest pages. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and heaven your dwelling-place. And whatever be your outward condition in this transient scene of things, you may still drink deep of those sweet and powerful succours which gave to the suffering mind of the apostle such amazing strength and grandeur, when he exclaimed, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

THE

GLORIOUS CHANGES

WHICH

THE DYING SAINT

IS

DESTINED TO EXPERIENCE:

A SERMON.

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

DANIEL.

"This infancy of being cannot prove
The final issue of the works of God,
By boundless love and perfect wisdom form'd,
And ever rising with the rising mind."

THOMSON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE effect of a discourse, when printed, is not always the same with that which was experienced by those who heard it preached; especially if it were delivered with the help of scanty notes, and with the feeling excited by a solemn occasion, and by the presence of an immense audience. Written language, indeed, not only admits of a difference from that which is spoken, but in many instances demands it.

For these reasons, it is feared, this publication will disappoint the hopes of many who seemed to take the deepest interest in the several subjects, as addressed from the pulpit. As it has been deemed desirable to give an outline, though imperfect, of the general subject, other matter is now added; but all in pursuance of the design at first proposed. The title "Sermon" is retained; but, the reader will perceive from the nature and extent of the discussion, that some other name would have, probably, been more appropriate.

The Discourse was preached at Pitt-Street Chapel, April 2d, 1832, soon after the death of Mr. Peter Jones, the Senior Local Preacher in the Wesleyan-Connexion, Liverpool; and with a view to improve that occasion, in the presence of his brethren who had laboured with him many years in preaching the Gospel, and who highly respected him as a father in Christ.

Mr. Jones appears to have been a man of sincere piety; remarkable for his cheerful, peaceable, and affectionate disposition; firm in his attachment to the doctrines and discipline of the Methodist Connexion; and eminently useful as a Preacher and a Class-Leader.

He possessed uncommon zeal and talent for training up young Christians in the service of God; and seemed peculiarly qualified for comforting and strengthening timid and afflicted ones, by the interest he took in their spiritual welfare, and the kind and gentle manner which he invariably observed towards them.

Five Travelling Preachers, now in the Connexion, were indebted to that good man, as their Leader, for valuable assistance in the ways of God, before they were called to the work of the ministry. But a detailed account of his Life and Death will, probably, appear in another publication.

The imitation of so excellent a model of Christian love and benevolence is here again affectionately recommended to those who knew him; and chiefly to his beloved brethren the Local Preachers of both the Liverpool Circuits. At their particular request this Discourse has been made public, and to them it is hereby respectfully inscribed.

Could the subject itself have been treated in proportion to its unbounded grandeur and importance, nothing would have been more calculated to burn upon the imagination of the reader; and by this means, with the blessing of Almighty God, to penetrate, and charm, and purify his heart.

July 23*d*, 1832.

SERMON VI.

All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.—Job xiv. 14.

Suppose we should, at this very moment, receive unquestionable warning, that, in the course of six months from this time, we should be miraculously removed to another planet, there to spend the remainder of our mortal life in circumstances altogether new and inconceivable to us; how astounding, how deep, and how deepening would be the effect of such intelligence! And were we told in addition, that our highest prosperity, and only exemption from the greatest misery, during the period of that mysterious residence, would depend upon a certain practicable line of preparation assigned to us; how vastly would the interest be increased! What reflections, what emotions would agitate every bosom! With what altered views and feelings should we look upon the scenery and business of this world! And what would be the influence of all this on our conduct and pursuits!

Yet this imaginary situation would be altogether trivial, compared with that in which we are all now really and inevitably placed. We are all exposed every moment to a change of being and of circumstances infinitely more important, because involving a very different kind of existence,—far wider extremes of happiness and wretchedness,—and because those extremes are unchangeable and eternal. On what principle, then, except on that of some matchless infatuation, can we account for the general apathy of mankind, which defies the force of the most impressive truth and description, and motives and warnings, on this subject, every where in Scripture and in nature urged on our attention by the voice of God himself? By temporal things we are deeply affected, but not by eternal. "If the good man

of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up;" and all this to save some wretched quantity of goods and chattels, or, at most, his temporal life. And, though he knows, that "in such an hour as he thinks not the Son of man cometh," to effect the most tremendous revolutions, in regard to his body and his consciousness, and all that concerns him; and is much more certain of the fact of his coming than he could be, from undoubted information, of the assault of some nightly thief, which information could not fail to call forth his utmost vigilance: Yet, with a recklessness amounting to madness, and at the very moment proudly boasting of his wisdom, too, he does not, he will not, even from all these considerations freely admitted by him, watch and be ready.

Among the few exceptions to this fatal insensibility, we rank the great and good man who gave utterance to the text. The just and sublime reflections on mortality and its results, so frequently and so affectingly poured forth in his speeches, prove, that, even in the height of his prosperity, he had been accustomed to consider these subjects with a fixedness and seriousness of thought, quite unusual, even among men of the most powerful minds, and of the deepest intellectual reflection.

Whatever be the particular kind of "change" referred to in these words, whether the recovery of his health and fortune, or death, or the resurrection,—for the term implies "renovation," —it is clear, from the scope of his sentiments, that he views it in connexion with the whole of his successive being,—as some important link in the chain of his ceaseless, but marked and alterable, existence. Each of these changes either follows, or is followed by, another change, in mutual and necessary connexion; as waves bring on each other in the same out-spread mass of waters.

And his waiting for these awful changes implies more than a negative state of the mind respecting them,—more than submission to them; it implies a due preparation for them, arising from an intense examination of them, as tremendously important, and as demanding a peculiar and exclusive kind of fitness to meet them. And if Job felt so deeply while nothing more than the glimmerings of tradition, and very sparing revelation, fell upon the subject; how much more ought we to be impressed by the same subject, "now made manifest by the

appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

Happily, this light shines brightest on the path which leads to life and immortality, in the great doctrines of reconciliation, and of peace with God on earth; still it sheds its partial beams upon the last limits of the journey,—upon the shores and nearer tides of our futurity; and thus enables us to judge, with some truth and certainty, of that which lies in the farther—for there are no farthest—distances in our duration.

And if the contemplation of so great an end suggests attention to the means, that we may be constantly urged to observe this attention, it will be requisite to keep our eye steadfastly fixed upon the end, as the richest prize in the universe, and deserving the most intense exertion of all who, in the Christian race, are striving for the mastery. Let us, then, as far as circumstances may permit, and as the truth of God directs, just glance at the several transformations and situations which await the Christian at the close of this uncertain life.

I. The first of these is death.

Nature, in her thoughtful and unbiassed moods, shudders at the sound, even before she can minutely advert to the awful characters, and causes, and effects of dissolution. As to those in whom "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life," this dread is but instinctive, and is quite consistent with "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is merely constitutional and involuntary,—the shivering of humanity at plunging into the cold and bitter flood, from which she is well assured she must emerge with astonishing freshness and vigour.

It is the joy of the believer, and the misery of the sinner, to reflect, that death is by no means to be viewed as destruction or annihilation. Death is, indeed, a most desolating assault upon the fairest of God's sublunary works; but no part is lost, no portion of the body, no active, no passive power of the mind is destroyed. The whole man is preserved to be as easily re-edified at last into a more improved structure, as at first he was created from the chaos which required Omnipotence to form and inspire him.

There is no real skeleton called "death," and armed with scythe and arrow to destroy mankind. Yet this fiction is allowable, because it is graphical, and tends to affect the heart,

through the medium of the fancy. By "death" must be understood, "the extinction of animal life," which includes the separation of the soul, or thinking and imperishable spirit, from the body, and of both from the situations and associations of living men on earth. Strictly speaking, death is precisely this act of perfect separation; for, the pains and changes which precede are those of a living patient. This act may be supposed as momentary; and all that follows is in impenetrable darkness, except so far as God has been pleased to lift the veil by the cautious hand of revelation. At what particular time in the process of dying this separation is effected, is not known. It may be sooner, or later, after death has appeared to survivors as complete. For, life is sometimes merely suspended during a considerable period after the consciousness of its continuance has ceased; as in the case of those who have been restored to life after being upwards of an hour submerged in water. The presence of the thinking principle with the animal life of man is, no doubt, necessary to the directive application of his physical powers; but whether it be necessary to the mere existence of that life, or whether the union of the two be not, in certain circumstances, arbitrary, and essentially dependent on the will of God, is, perhaps, a question. And when the imperishable flame is finally disengaged from its material lamp, it does not seem of necessity to follow, that it should immediately ascend. It is an ancient opinion, but merely conjectural, that the souls of the departed hover, during some short space of time, as with a parting fondness, near their bodies, and the friends, and terrestrial scenes, which they are just about to leave.

To him whose peace is made with God, who "rejoices in hope of the glory of God," who watches and is ready, there can be nothing in what is called "the article of death" to confound and agonize the mind. There may be sorrow, but that sorrow is soon to terminate in life; just the reverse of "the sorrow of the world which worketh death." Dying tends to consummate our preparation for the joys of heaven, and then it will heighten them. Even pain has its limits, and, when raised to a certain pitch, is followed by insensibility; besides, a merciful kind of stupor, somewhat similar to sleep, is very frequently the natural accompaniment of death, and must greatly alleviate the pangs of dissolution. This, while it teaches the wicked, that the bed of death is by no means the proper place for repentance, admonishes

the Christian at all times to observe that "looking for, and hastening unto, the coming of the day of God," which will render, at least, the enraptured consolations of religion less necessary in his dying moments.

But the dying saint sometimes is seen to rise, in the vigour of his faith, above every species of dismay. His countenance, though pale and sunken, is the mirror of a great and elevated soul. It seems, from its unearthly sweetness of expression, to reflect a ray from the heaven to which he is going; and, in smiling, glowing, sparkling looks, which might defy the impassioned pencil of the artist, speaks unequivocally, and most eloquently, of peace and joy within;— of "peace that passeth all understanding;" and of "joy unspeakable and full of glory." He listens to the summons as to a trumpet that calls him to a glorious field; and though he finds, that, in regard to his poor sinking frame, the battle must be fatal, yet he knows it is the last, and would be ashamed at the very thought of meanly refusing to engage in a struggle so momentary, but so sublime, and so mighty in its consequences. He must fall, but in that very moment he shall conquer, shall triumph and exult. He is quite prepared. His mind has taken a noble set,— position of unflinching power,—and he pants for the decisive closure with a foe, whom, anticipating the result, he calls his "friend."

Yet here is no proud feeling, no unholy boasting, nothing of the maddening bravado of an earthly warrior, who fights for praise, or from passion: or, at most, to secure the little, though commendable, object of maintaining or restoring a nation's temporal rights. The mind of the dying Christian soars a loftier pitch; yet manifests a temper lowered and softened in the extreme. His weeping friends are struck with his humility, his meekness, his gentleness; and wonder, that qualities so opposite as those of firmness and subduedness should harmonize so perfectly in the self-same character. The little child is a giant in his might. There is grandeur in the lowly stooping of his patient endurance. And thus he puts to equal shame the cowardly rashness of the suicide, the proud and senseless daring of the infidel,—leaving, like Hume, his beloved friends with a jest,—and the stupid and ignorant insensibility of the careless sinner.

But for the prominent superiority of this interesting scene we

can easily account. Perfect love has long since cast out all tormenting fear; and every other tremulous fear has at length been driven after it. He has a certain and a lively sense of the presence of his Saviour; and loftily sings out his confidence: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." His prospect now becomes nearer, and brighter, and larger, than he has ever at any former period beheld it. The eventful moment is arrived; and gathering up the whole strength of both his body and his soul, he shouts in the remarkable words once uttered by an expiring saint of great eminence, "Now—heartily for heaven—through Jesus Christ."

But transports of joy, derived immediately from God, in perfect opposition to all the natural states both of body and of mind at death, are often, and beyond all question, the lot of the departing Christian. We need not go for proof to those who are scorned as enthusiasts. Dr. Beattie tells us, that when the celebrated Dr. Campbell seemed to be just expiring, and had told his wife and niece that it was so, a cordial happened unexpectedly to revive him. As soon as he was able to speak, he said, that he wondered to see their countenances so melancholy and covered with tears, in the apprehension of his departure. "At that instant," said he, "I felt my mind in such a state, in the thoughts of my immediate dissolution, that I can express my feelings in no other way, than by saying, that I was in a rapture." "The feelings," Beattie adds, "of such a mind as Dr. Campbell's, in such an awful moment, when he certainly retained the full use of all his faculties, deserve to be attended to; and we may exclaim, 'When will an infidel die such a death?'" And, in the same paragraph, the same distinguished character assures us, that he himself had witnessed many such instances.

If we speak from our natural apprehensions, we should say, that as soon as the soul has fully crossed this stormy sea, she must feel a mixed emotion of horror at the violence which

death (for even pardoned sin) has been appointed to perpetrate upon the endeared habitation of her body; and of pleasure at her instantaneous and perfect relaxation from all pain. The novelty, sublimity, and glory of the circumstances into which she has just entered may possibly, for the moment, increase the consternation; as dazzling light is in some degree distressing when it suddenly succeeds to darkness. But this, if it exist at all, must be of short duration. From her native elasticity, and the moulding impressiveness of her exalted situation; and, above all, from the presence and power of the Holy Ghost within her, she must instantly assume a deep and settled tone of consciousness and character, which cannot possibly admit of pain.

We may also presume, that at this moment holy angels in multitudes sing out the victory of the sainted stranger; as ancient cities used to pour forth their thousands to welcome home some conqueror enriched with spoils and honours.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

II. The second of those sublime and solemn changes to which we have been referring, is that of the separate or intermediate state; so called, because the soul is believed to live in a state of consciousness, and separate from the body, throughout the whole interval between death and the resurrection.

That such a state exists, appears to be revealed with abundant clearness in various passages of Scripture. Yet the very possibility of this separate existence of the soul has been denied; though the existence of God, who is a spirit, and after whose image, in this respect as well as others, man was created, demonstrates that possibility. In the opinion of Dr. Priestley, there is no such being as the soul, considered as a substance differing in its nature from the body, and either joined with it, or disunited from it. What we call "the soul," he only allows to be a property, or power of animated matter; saying plainly, in fact, that the soul is the body, and the body is the soul; and that death is the utter extinction of this power, which can only be recovered by the resurrection at the last day.

Are these the doctrines of Scripture? The whole character and current of its terms prove the contrary. If such an

opinion could be drawn from those terms, it might well be supposed, that what is called "the language of Divine truth" either means the reverse of its obvious signification; or that it tends to deceive more than any other language, and on subjects, too, of the greatest importance to the whole human race.

But, perhaps, this doctrine is proved both by experience and inductive reasoning. How? What anatomy of the brain will pretend to point out the modes and mazy windings of thought? The facts of observation and of consciousness, connected with the inquiry, are themselves disputed, and frequently assume the very question in debate. If one man should say, "I feel my thinkings are material; I perceive them grinding on each other, and hear their effervescence;" another would say, "I am not at all sensible of any such thing. I have no experience or conviction, that matter can either think, or will, or feel, any more than the heavenly bodies can, of themselves, contrary to the known laws of matter, either commence or discontinue their own motion. From all my acquaintance with the facts of the case, I am convinced that the soul alone sees and hears, and feels pain and pleasure; and that flesh and blood are only the mediums by which, in these instances, it acts and is conscious. Besides, I find that what I call 'the soul' can think upon itself, and then review these thoughts, and then examine these reviews; can select and reject, can recall and dismiss, can transpose and combine her thoughts; and all with perfect judgment and reason, as an architect can rear a palace, and clear it of its rubbish. I have no conception that all this can be done by an accident, or property of two or three solid inches of a spongy material; by any stringing or tuning of nerves, or by any mechanical or chemical combination of bones and blood and brains. Where, then, are the facts of induction to prove that the body thinks? Astrology has more show of reason to prove the mystic qualities it ascribes to the stars."

But we are told there are facts to prove that the brain thinks, just as there are others to show, that the muscles have the power of motion; for in some states of the brain, it is said, thought goes on, in others it is deranged, or ceases altogether. Would not the reasoning be just as good to say, that a musical instrument is its own performer, because, in some instances, it sends forth sounds, and in others it does not? or that

in the moment of its destruction by some accident, the musician died with it; his faculty of playing being wholly dependent on the existence of the sounding body? There is also a certain force of the soul, independent of the body, which proves that the mind and the brain are no more to be confounded with each other than the performer and his instrument. In the "Memoirs of the Philosophical Society of Manchester" it is clearly shown, that every part of the brain has been injured without affecting the thought; a discovery which tends to overthrow the doctrine of their identity or sameness. But if matter think, why in the new-born infant does not the brain commence its noble functions? Why should it require a long train of experiments to inspire it with the power of reflection? Nothing of this kind is required to teach the heart to beat, or the blood to circulate. Again: How can consciousness and memory consist with the changes which are constantly passing in the brain? Have its former particles transferred their shares of mind to the succeeding ones? Or, if not, how can these know, and be responsible for what was felt and done by their predecessors?

We may just add here, that fainting, swooning, and cases of suspended animation, only prove, that while the soul may still be considered as a substance of herself, she may either be stunned for a while into comparative unconsciousness; or may subsequently forget what passed at the time, as we forget our dreams, and what we experienced, both of great pain and pleasure, many years ago.

If, then, this doctrine be neither scriptural, nor experimental, nor conceivable, it is not very likely to be a matter of intuitive perception; as, for instance, in regard to space or extension we are sure it must be boundless. On the contrary, the whole race of mankind, with few exceptions, are in some way conscious of an essential distinction between the body and the soul. Yet there is no opinion so absurd as not to be defended by some eccentric minds. Some intelligent men, quite rational on all other subjects, have denied their own existence, and have endeavoured to support the assertion by argument for many years. And a century ago, Mr. Asgill, a member of parliament, wrote a book, to show, that as Christ died for sinners, believers need not die for themselves; and declared his own determination not to die, but to go to heaven flying like an eagle through the air. Let not

Christians be shaken from their faith in the plain truth of Scripture by instances like these.

But revelation is our "rock of defence" on this most interesting subject. Solomon says, "The spirit of man goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast goeth downward to the earth." And Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" "Spirit" here is said by our objectors to mean nothing more than the life, or animation of the dying frame. But how can that which becomes extinct be said to go from one being to another? Or, suppose it could, what difference is there between its motion in a man, and in a beast? Is not the mode of animal extinction the same in both cases? Why, then, is one expiration said to go upwards, and the other downwards? Do they not both go one way, or rather go not at all? And could the spirit of the martyr in this sense of the term be received? What substantial thing was either to be received or given? If the sense be correctly interpreted by our objectors, it would have been less deceptive and equally rational to have said, "Receive my nothingness!"

The question seems to be settled by the words of our Lord to the dying thief, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But the obvious meaning of this text is attempted to be set aside by two very singular interpretations, the mention of which will probably be sufficient to confute them. One is to this effect; "This day, or just now, I give thee certain hope that thou shalt be with me in paradise at the resurrection of the just." The other is, "This day, that is, in the course of several days, at my ascension; or several thousand years, when the last judgment shall have passed, thou shalt be with me in the kingdom of heaven." Thus because a word is sometimes employed in a very unusual and accommodated sense,—as a day for a year in the language of prophecy,—it shall, in common use, be forcibly deprived of its plain and proper meaning, when a purpose must be answered by it, and the other meaning thrust upon it, to the confusion of language, and the discredit of the speaker. Or, because the expression "day" may, by possibility, be joined with any one of the several branches of a sentence, it shall be put to that which gives the most unnatural interpretation, common sense being judge. Besides, from the testimony of the ablest critics we are warranted to say, that all or very nearly all the versions and copies of the text, both ancient and modern,

decide in favour of the popular interpretation, by placing the comma after "thee," where it now stands. It is also evident, that the present time—"to-day"—is put in opposition to the distant period to which the thief alludes, saying, "when thou comest in thy kingdom." The reply seems to be,—"Thy happiness shall not be so long deferred, but shall be granted even now."

The following text seems equally demonstrative. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." One can hardly conceive of language more clear and express to prove the distinction between these two substances. But, according to materialism, men do kill the soul; put an end to its existence, at least for some thousands of years. And if it still be said, "The words of the text are well chosen, because the soul shall be restored at the resurrection;" we reply, that the same may justly be affirmed of the body; and we may, therefore, assert, "A murderer cannot kill the body." It is then evident, according to this scheme, that he kills both at once, or neither. And we may add, that death, if materialism be correct, destroys the proper identity of every human being; terminates their whole existence; and renders the resurrection absolutely impossible, as, at the last day, that which is so called is, to all intents and purposes, a new creation. And thus the beings so created must, without a moral trial, be rewarded or punished for what was done by another race of beings with whom they had no connexion; for who can suppose that the numerical particles of the corrupted body constitute the accountable identity of the moral man?

When St. Paul says, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better;" we cannot but be surprised, if this opinion be allowed, that he should hesitate one moment to prefer a useful life on earth to useless extinction in the grave. In what possible sense, in this case, could it be better to depart than to remain? And how should he be "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," if, in the nature of the fact, there could be no such thing as absence from the body, and therefore no real presence with the Lord, till the day of resurrection? We are told by the objectors, that he accounted the period between death and the resurrection as nothing; and spoke in reference,

not to real but apparent time. But, supposing the apostles were so very metaphysical, this distinction makes the matter worse, by showing, that as the question was thus subjected to an abstract examination, he ought to have built his choice on real time, and that without the least suspense or question. A multitude of texts might be adduced; but these alone may serve to show, how slender are the arguments brought forward to oppose the doctrine of the strict and proper immortality of the soul.

With regard to the situation of the intermediate state, the inquiry will be thought more curious than edifying. Yet nothing can fail to be deeply interesting connected with this subject, so far as certainty can be obtained. Place there must be, wherever there is real existence; though separate spirits most probably refer but little to it for their immediate solace and enjoyment. Nor can place, however glorious, be the chief delight of the redeemed; and we may say, that if heaven were in hell,—supposing this were possible,—still God could, even there, make his people perfectly happy. Yet place must be considered as an auxiliary source of our future bliss. But, sometimes, the views of Christians respecting it are by far too geographical, and therefore unsupported and at variance with each other. The references to this point in the Scriptures are but few, and of very general and indefinite signification.

The uniform voice of antiquity, both sacred and profane, has fixed the place of happiness far above this world, and that of misery much lower than the earth; conformably to our natural notions of light and darkness,—the appropriate images of joy and grief. Some believe the spirits of unhappy men are confined after death in the centre of the earth. Others say in the sun; others, in the lowest of the three heavens to which St. Paul refers, or just above the region of the clouds, where satan is supposed to be "the prince of the power of the air;" the region of the stars being the second; and the third, where the glorified body of Christ dwells, and where the resurrection bodies of the saints shall be ultimately placed, occupying a space far beyond all our visible systems. This is deemed to be the place of heaven, properly so called. To these may be added another glorious locality in "the new heavens and new earth," mentioned by St. Peter, and which some believe will be the seat of millennial glory. They are not agreed, however, as to time; one class believing that this

will take place before the general judgment; another, that it will occur during that vast process; and a third, that it will follow, and be enjoyed by all the redeemed, just before their final elevation to the highest heaven. But some are of opinion, that this eternal abode is precisely the place which St. Peter here describes, as formed from the ashes of our ancient world of sin and curse; and if so, this shows the complete restitution of the redeemed universe; the soul renewed, the body raised, and the local habitation of both restored; and all made perfect and immortal.

Heaven and paradise are commonly supposed to mean the same place. But this appears to be owing to a loose generality of expression; for all beyond death, to good men, is usually talked about as heaven. The language of Scripture is more definite. We do not find that paradise is there called "heaven." And, as Dr. Campbell has observed, we seem to have but one text in which heaven is called "paradise;"—that of St. John, where he mentions "the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God;"—and which figuratively expresses the promise of eternal life, alluding to its forfeiture by Adam in the garden of Eden. Such use of terms is obvious, and frequent in all writings. Heaven may thus be called "paradise," just as a beautiful country is, in our admiration, called Arcadia; or as the charm of domestic worship in a lonely cottage on some heath has been described by quoting the sentiment of the poet:—

"And paradise was open'd in the wild."

The same excellent critic further observes, that the "third heavens," and "paradise," mentioned in St. Paul's rapture, are not the same place; for the Apostle, as he conceives, has there described two different instances of this kind, as appears from their being called "visions and revelations;" and from the striking repetition of "whether in the body or out of the body," which occurs in the narrative.

"Hades" is the name applied to the separate state; consisting of paradise, the place of blessed spirits, and of "Tartarus,"—so called by St. Peter, when speaking of imprisoned angels,—the region of the wicked. These two places appear to be in the vicinity of each other, and, perhaps, in the air, as mentioned above. It is believed by some, that Christ after death passed

through the latter to go to the former; and that this is the way through which all happy spirits, guarded by angels, on their departure from the body, must pass to their place of intermediate repose. Gehenna is not Tartarus, but "hell," properly so called; or the place of eternal punishment into which the wicked shall be cast immediately after judgment at the last day.

But the several positions which we must suppose to exist in space are necessarily relative. To any one in the centre of the universal sphere, height and depth would be merely nominal and arbitrary. And what is high in reference to one point may be low in regard to another. It seems reasonable to presume, that the eternal Shechinah, or shrine of the visible majesty of Jehovah, and the glorified body of the Saviour, will be in the midst, if midst it may be called; but how they stand relatively to this world, it is neither possible nor necessary to determine. Nor have we any good reason to believe, that this kingdom of excelling brightness will be fixed and immovable; but, judging by analogy from what we know of systems, we may suppose just the contrary.

Some of these opinions have been urged by no mean men in the church; and if they have failed to give decision to such questions, it becomes us to be very modest in our approaches to inquiries so awfully mysterious. Still, there is something so marked and tangible in circumstances, though but probable, that the effect may, perhaps, be salutary, and lead us to the substance with an interest sufficient to justify our humble conjectures. On this account these few observations on place, though somewhat digressive, may not be altogether useless; and, therefore, may be deemed not only innocent, but laudable.

To return, then, to the happy spirit just departed. He is "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." How a spirit can be carried by other spirits, we know not. But the parable from which these words are taken, whether historical or fictitious, still asserts the fact. Is not the thing just as conceivable, as that an angel should lay hold on the hand of Lot, or smite Peter on the side, or open the prison doors? Is there not as near an affinity between two disembodied spirits as between spirit and matter? Or, if *to carry* means only "to conduct, or accompany," may not departed spirits exert a self-moving power; and, attracted by the presence of angels,—for spirits even in this

life attract or repel each other,—go, directed by them, to their place of rest?

If the way to paradise should lie upon the confines of the infernal prison, it must not be supposed that this is with any view to purgatorial preparations. We may venture to assert, that there is not the smallest hint of any such doctrine in the whole Bible, but that our moral trial is invariably represented as confined to the present life. Yet we may easily imagine,—supposing it be, indeed, our path,—that most important knowledge may be gained, on this awful journey, both of the righteous and the merciful perfections of God, and of the inconceivable value of our own felicity, which may appear to be doubled by this contrast with such misery.

The precise nature and circumstances of the separate state are not revealed. Enough, however, is made known, or is probable, to incline us to believe, that it is not, as some good critics and good Christians have imagined, a condition of absolute unconsciousness. "To sleep" is a figurative expression derived from the appearance of the body after death, and may be found in all languages, whatever be the popular belief respecting the state of the dead; and is never used in reference to the death of animals, which is deemed to be a state of entire and absolute extinction. Some who believe in the separate existence of the soul are notwithstanding of opinion, that in its state of separation it remains unconscious till the resurrection. Even Priestley rejects this notion; and allows, that, if it were supposed to exist at all, as separate from the body, it is not to be imagined it should lie inert and torpid for some thousands of years. Several of the preceding texts and observations are also, we think, a sufficient reply to this class of opponents. Such persons forget that the soul which they deny to be material is essentially an active, thinking, willing, conscious agent; and seems to be such in a very high degree, even when the body is almost spent and gone. This appears, for instance, to be strikingly the case in the pestilential disease now prevailing in our country, and which often blasts and withers almost every power of the body, while it leaves the immaterial spirit in complete possession of herself. A medical gentleman expressed to me, that, in beholding such a patient, he felt as if in the presence of a living soul without a body. How can a spirit, essentially active, ever cease to be so without losing its existence?

The dead who die in the Lord are, no doubt, in a state of perfect rest and peace; of holy recollection, and of rapturous anticipation. They are "present with the Lord." They know this more surely and unalterably than they could do while on earth; and feel more strongly the effects of his love, and protection, and manifested presence. If St. Paul could say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," when this was only the life of faith; how much more complete and sensible must this union be as soon as the spirit shall be delivered from the burden of the flesh; and shall recognise, in the liveliness of her unfettered sensibility, the powerful evidences of her Lord's Divine presence!

Besides, the presence of the Holy Ghost within her must be more deeply felt, and must variously effect her consciousness with greater power than could be admitted in her former state of trial and imprisonment. With regard to one of these important operations, the learned and pious Dr. Lucas, prebendary of Westminster, delivers his opinion in these brief words: "We know well, that the Spirit of God, even in this life, 'beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' How easy and natural is it, then, to believe, that God will render this judgment of his eternal Spirit brighter and stronger when out of the body, and in another world!" Such is the opinion of this excellent writer. We may reasonably take this for the private judgment supposed to pass upon departed saints in preparation for the public judgment of all their actions to be pronounced at the last day.

The activity of the soul, it would seem, in the separate state, will be chiefly, if not entirely, confined to her own interior. Deprived of her body,—the great, but, perhaps, not the only medium of communication with external objects,—we must naturally suppose that so far she is imperfect; and we find it difficult to form any notion of the manner in which she holds correspondence with such objects; whether immediately, or by some temporary organ or vehicle, provided to supply the place of senses. We can enter much more easily into the operations of her consciousness; put forth in direct acts of thinking, by which she can reduce her former mental stores into new thoughts, new combinations, new conclusions; and in reflex operations, by which she knows her thoughts to be her own, and can examine and enjoy them. Even in the present life she can withdraw her

attention altogether from the body; and, retiring wholly from the external world into herself, she seems, if we may use the expression, to revolve upon her own centre, as if perfectly independent of all other objects, even of her own locality. This appears as well in the action of dreaming as in the process of intense thinking. In both these kinds of consciousness, and particularly in the deep abstractedness and vigour of the mind, often manifested just before death, the spirit seems to make some effort to escape from her mortal prison; stretching out upon the confines of the land of true and glorious liberty, and anticipating the more perfect extension and exertion of her faculties in the disembodied state.

The great difference, then, between both states will probably consist in two things; first, in the strengthening of all the powers of the mind, both active and passive,—understanding, memory, imagination, and sensibility,—to an astonishing degree; and then, in the occupation of those powers exclusively on grand and beneficial subjects; and in the best and happiest possible manner of pursuing the reflections. Of such reflections, no doubt, evil will sometimes be the subject. But evil in such circumstances may be justly termed "good." Evil itself will be absent, and only seem to exist in speculation and in picture, as it were; divested of all that would afflict the sanctified spirit now delivered from it; in some such way, perhaps,—to compare small things with great,—as a horrid battle or a blasted tree becomes a subject even of pleasing interest, when faithfully delineated by the genius of the painter. Celestial recollections and images of evil, for aught we can tell to the contrary,—such is the power of God in bending all things to his purpose,—may be sources of incredible instruction and enjoyment.

Knowledge in that blessed state must be great beyond conception; for at the bidding of the memory the entire experience and intelligence of the past may be expected to rush back upon the capacious mind at once; while hope will anticipate an immeasurable extent of the future, and this, too, with absolute truth and certainty. We may suppose the whole extent of this knowledge will, in the penetrating light of a perfect understanding, be instantly analyzed, and classed, and valued, and the good retained, and that which is trivial and indifferent dropped for ever. Imagination may give to the subjects of this knowledge wonderful combinations, and a vividness corresponding to what we

know of the energy of that extraordinary power;—a power which will then be perfectly regulated, and subservient to the noblest and the holiest of purposes. The soul in Hades is supposed to be at rest and stationary. But may not the loss of motion and of actual vision be supplied by that faculty, as it bodies forth the brightest images of blessed objects,—boundless worlds of glory, either the true resemblances of such as have existence, or the types of such as the mind may suppose to exist; all peopled with the servants, and resounding with the services, of God,—the great object of their unanimous but various worship?

And, above all, who can tell the magnitude and effect which will then be given, in the mind of the saint, to the plan of our redemption? infinitely far outshining every other subject and object with its own unborrowed splendour; and giving to all things else an interest and a glory much beyond what of themselves they could possess. In that happy world truth universally—truth the element and food of minds, but truth in particular relating to salvation—must supply that enriching, that surpassing weight of satisfaction, of which in this imperfect state we are wholly incapable.

And then, as to the presence of the blessed Redeemer, how must this rejoice and elevate the company of the redeemed! In visiting their paradise, when he had suffered for them on the cross, he may possibly have left the footsteps of his glory there, and endowed it with properties and privileges which it did not possess before; but, in a real and proper sense, as we have already stated, his presence, though perhaps in vision only, is still with them, while in his glorified body he remains at the right hand of God. We on earth can, in some respects, enjoy the presence of a friend whom we know to be near us, but whom we do not recognise by our bodily senses. Do we not feel some sense of reverence, of joy, and of approaching majesty, when at some royal procession trumpets tell us that the king is just about to appear? And even in this life Jesus manifests himself to his people as he does not to the world. But what must be the effect of more intimate and unrestrained discoveries of himself in paradise! What wonder, what love, what admiration, what elevation, and what joy must be felt and uttered by the still increasing multitudes of holy worshippers in that blessed region!

In dismissing these remarks on the intermediate state, we may just observe, for contrast and illustration, that all this blessedness must be completely reversed in the region of unhappy spirits. There, evil in its worst sense must be substantially and dreadfully present; for they themselves are evil, and God's anger—the greatest of all penal evils—must inexorably agonize them. And, as in the former instance, evil, from the heavenly power of the contemplation in which it is beheld, is transformed to good; so, in this contrary case of horrible perversion, the good of virtue and of heaven, reflected in their guilty minds, is turned to evil; and must wofully augment the misery of their positive condition. And what must be the wretchedness of their intense recollection; enlightened by unclouded truth, and embittered by a conscience, not now "seared with a hot iron," but exquisitely sensible, and, though tender, indestructible! All this, together with the ceaseless tempest of unholy passions, with despair, and terrible suspense as to the exact kind and quantum of their future miseries, combined with lacerating fears and forebodings, must consummate their punishment. But we dare not enter farther, for the present, into these most appalling of all imaginable torments. May God, in his great mercy, save us from them!

III. The next great change which those who die in Christ are destined to experience, relates to the resurrection of the body. Here we need not advert to argument, as in the preceding observations; for the fact of the resurrection is admitted by all who believe in the truth of the New Testament. Correct and consolatory views of the state implied in this event are much more seasonable and interesting.

This change comprises the period between our resurrection and the commencement of our perfect happiness in heaven. How far this final era of residence on earth may extend, and how many other alterations and transactions it may carry with it, we cannot know till we ourselves become the astonished subjects of them.

The resurrection itself will most probably be effected, like the change on the bodies of those who remain, and at the same time, by the power of God at once; "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." It is remarkable, that in nature God works by general and

slowly-operating laws; but in the kingdoms of his grace and glory, by particular wills, and in the production of unexpected and extraordinary effects. Creation and the first man were formed by a process. In eternity, it would seem, effects will not be thus produced. God will then be all in all, and strikingly display his power. At present we are probationers, and live by faith, and not by sight, that we may dutifully distinguish between God and nature.

The resurrection of the righteous is attributed by St. Paul, not to the general power of God, by which even the wicked are continued in existence, but to the peculiar and gracious agency of the Holy Ghost. "We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

This, in my judgment, is a most interesting view of the subject; and in beautiful harmony with the other leading offices of this Divine Agent. He who, in the first place, puts forth his power to cleanse the soul, by the blood of Christ, from all moral "filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit," will not fail to perform a similar work upon the body,—his own eternal temple. But the time is not yet come for this last exertion of his saving power.

When the effect of this power is sudden, yet great and glorious, it is represented as deriving, as it were, its birth from the energy exerted. Hence the use of the term "regeneration," and of "son" and "sons of God," applied to Adam, and to angels, because their existence was communicated by his immediate power, and partook of his glorious image. And because a similar effect, or the right of sonship, is produced by the authoritative act of adoption, believers are called the "sons of God" in this sense, as well as in that of regeneration. The apostle seems to connect our sonship very peculiarly with the office of the Spirit, as both effecting our regeneration, and as giving testimony to the resembling fact of our adoption. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." As sons by adoption, they are heirs of eternal life; as sons by regeneration, they possess the "first-fruits" of that entire work of redemption which will finally include the body as its subject. Hence our

Lord, when speaking of his diciples following him "in the regeneration," or final renovation, of all things, employs the same original word used by St. Paul, where, referring to a spiritual change upon the soul, he calls it, "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." In perfect keeping with these views, believers are said to be "the children of the resurrection;" that is, perfected in their whole being by the power of God; and will not need the corruptible succours of those who are now the children of Adam, but will be like God, their Divine Parent, in his glory, and in his immortality, bearing even in their bodies "the image of the heavenly" man. It quite accords with this statement, that our resurrection, like that of Christ, should also be attributed to the Father, and to the Son, as the Holy Ghost is the Spirit both of God and of Christ. "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus."

Thus the blessed Spirit who now sanctifies and comforts us will quicken our mortal bodies by that same holy, strong, and gracious power, the effects of which we now enjoy, as pledges of those miracles of splendour in the resurrection, to which also it will then give birth. Of such effects the wicked can know nothing; because they have grieved this Spirit, and have forced him to forsake them. Hence they are not among the "dead in Christ who shall rise first," but must afterwards be dragged from their graves by a very different power.

This change upon the future body of the righteous must vastly exceed the bounds of our present comprehension. Yet something of it is revealed, and this, too, in several of its prominent and distinctive characters and circumstances, and in expressions which must have a meaning, and which must have been intended to be in some sense understood. The danger here, as in many other cases, lies in travelling out of the Record; or, which is the same thing, forcing it to speak a language not intended by the writer. Still the general subject is somewhat veiled; probably, that we may exercise our holiness, and give the greater depth to the interest of the discoveries, by actively disclosing them in serious thoughtfulness and prayer. We may add, that whatever is of the nature of conjecture ought, of course, to be proposed with great modesty and reverence. The apostles and first Christians seem to have dwelt upon the general subject with peculiar frequency and pleasure.

The resurrection of the same body need not as a doctrine per-

plex our minds. As to this and all other difficulties connected with the question, the faith of a Christian rests with perfect confidence in the wisdom and omnipotence of Him "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." It is an indisputable truth, that the identity of the proper man lies in the imperishable mind, and that hereafter, as well as in this world, he will possess a body which, whatever be its changes, he may always call his own. As out of the same chaotic mass God fashioned, and perpetuates, as St. Paul states, a beautiful and useful distinction among plants, and animals, and celestial bodies; so that acorns, for instance, never degenerate into the seeds of thistles; in like manner he has promised to secure to us the eternal possession of an appropriate or human body, not the body of a bird, or one belonging to any other race of beings besides that of man.

This appears to be the kind of sameness intended by St. Paul, and the only one of real value connected with the case. On this principle, there is no conceivable necessity for recovering the numerical particles of which the earthly body was composed. The whole reasoning of the apostle appears to be against this. And the mystic notion of a germ is equally unnecessary. It is true the apostle mentions seeds of plants, but we need not push the comparison by supposing that the body also has its seed in the grave. The comparison is between two cases, one of which is governed by natural, the other by supernatural agency; and if a similar practical effect be produced in both cases, we need not seek for an exact similarity in the two methods of producing that effect. If any one should engage by agreement to take our dwelling for a time, and then restore it as good as when he entered on it; but should either greatly improve it by repairs, or take it down, and build us a far superior one, we should not controvert the question of its sameness with that which we left. The sameness lies in the specific meaning of the term "house." A cave or a den would destroy the true identity of the case; but that would not be destroyed by any thing containing all the essential requisites of a house. Mere physical identity would here be an idle speculation. That is always a man's "own body" which for the present exists in living union with his soul. The same material particles are no more requisite to constitute

identity than the same size, and form, and colour; and these no one in his senses will suppose must be strictly resumed at the last day.

Still, the term "resurrection" retains its proper meaning, as implying the restoration of that which for a season had been dropped. This is clear, first, from the sense of identity as just explained; and then from the circumstance, that earth, as in the case of Adam originally, will be the matter out of which the bodies of the whole race will be formed. Nor, after all, is it inconsistent with these sentiments to believe, that the mass and substance of each body will be preserved distinct from that of others, and will furnish, by the plastic power of God, a certain portion or essence from the whole, as the proximate material of which the future body shall be fashioned. And here, again, we need not have recourse either to some animal germ, or a solution of the difficulty respecting sameness with all the particles that had ever entered into the composition of the former body. Resurrection, to Omnipotence, is as easy as creation.

The future soul, and its resurrection-body, separately considered, will, no doubt, be advanced to an astonishing degree of perfection. But the relative importance, arising from their union, will add to this perfection an incalculable increase. Suppose, for illustration, our present frail body could be actuated by some spirit much superior to any ever yet known in the ranks of humanity; may we not presume, that this mighty agent would act upon the body more dexterously and effectually, in many instances, than our present dull and unskilled souls could possibly attain to? Again: Let us fancy that a mind of common capacity is conjoined with a body of prodigious properties of sense and motion, could not that spirit, with all its imperfection, apply this noble instrument, in certain circumstances, to extraordinary advantage? But let the perfect spirit and the perfect body be united with each other, and now the value of each is indefinitely multiplied by that of its companion.

The exact kind of substance of which the body will be formed is not fully shown in Scripture. In this, perhaps, as in many other particulars respecting the eternal state, to impart such information was, from the nature of the subject, absolutely impossible. Our conception, notwithstanding, is in some degree

assisted by the expression "spiritual body." The term "spiritual" is merely expressive of a property of the substance, like the other terms used by St. Paul. Of the substance itself we cannot form the least idea; as, indeed, with all our experience, we know nothing of the essence either of our present bodies, or of matter in general. This property, however, seems to bring us nearer to the notion of the matter of the risen body than any other used by the apostle.

It is, indeed, a body as distinct from the rational and ruling mind, as our present earthly frame is from the soul that inspires it; but not composed of gross, particled, and ponderous materials, like this of flesh and blood; which, instead of moving obedient at the will of the soul, restricts her exertions, and reduces her to the beggary of depending on the most pitiful expedients to assist her crippled powers in the progress of life; enchains her to this earth, and makes her, in some sense, only comparable to the slimy creature that creeps, and drags its shell upon its back. The complete reverse of all this must be the character of a "spiritual body." It is neither purely spiritual, like the thinking substance; nor grossly material, like our present bodies; but something between both, formed of a matter, as Mr. Wesley conjectures, similar to that of light or ether. Opposed to our thinking principle, and as its instrument, it is material; compared with our present body, it is beyond all conception sublimated and refined, and in this sense termed "spiritual." The phrase "spiritual body" is just as obvious and consistent in its meaning as spirituous and animal spirits, commonly applied to what we know is material, but comparatively pure and ethereal. In the same clear sense of the subject, the apostle has the expression "carnal mind." Every one must know that he cannot mean a mind made of flesh, for this would be a contradiction; but a fleshly mind;—a mind sensual in its thoughts, and propensities, and habits; subservient to the animal part;—instead of maintaining its own legitimate royalty, and stamping the whole man with the indubitable character of its own original, its own celestial dignity.

We may then conclude, that the resurrection-body will be body still, even in our common notion of that substance; otherwise, the apostle might have spared his description as altogether unintelligible. It will be the present body, but astonishingly changed and perfected; impassible, indivisible, irresistible;

promptly moving in all directions, quickly rushing through all mediums, and capable of going to all distances, all worlds; perhaps, as Luther conjectures, with more than the rapidity of lightning or of thought. What cannot God the Holy Ghost effect, either by imparting, or as being himself, the locomotive power of this illustrious body? Of this we have some lower instances in Elijah taken up in a chariot of fire; in the motion of our Lord's body, as carried into the wilderness to be tempted; and, after he was risen from the grave, in his sudden appearances, and in his ascension; and also in the quick removal of Philip to Azotus, distant forty miles from Gaza.

As the apostle has used the word "spiritual" in opposition to "natural" or "animal," we infer, that the future body, instead of being sustained by any thing analogous to the perishable nutriment of our present flesh and blood, will be kept in undecaying life, either from its own native vigour, or from its union with the thinking mind, whose presence may be the perennial fountain of its immortality; or by the immediate power of God. In either case the sustenance is drawn from within, and not from any elements, however pure, without. So much for the substance of the resurrection-body.

With respect to its form and organization, our conclusions must be gathered from several Scriptures compared and harmonized. St. Paul says, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them." In this case, what a mighty change must pass upon the body! Yet the body of Christ after his resurrection, and those of Moses and Elias at the transfiguration, appear to have preserved their orginal form and structure. But this was not the glorified body, in the strict and proper sense of the word. Still it possessed extraordinary powers, and was governed by new laws. As it was yet on earth, it was necessary it should retain its earthly form, in order to become at all intelligible to earthly beholders. The grand changes, no doubt, took place in the ascension; which changes it was proper should be kept from those witnesses by the intervention of a cloud. But when those bodies shall return to this material world at the day of judgment, congruity may require that they should resume their native form; which may also be the form of all the bodies that shall rise from the grave, till the judgment be finished, and the whole

army of the redeemed, with the Saviour at their head, mount from this burning world, and put on, as they ascend, the inconceivable forms and ineffable magnificence of their highest state in heaven. Then the intellectual senses of sight and of hearing will probably be retained, and astonishingly strengthened, while all the lower senses will be merged in the higher; just as clay in the hand of the potter, who dislikes the present form of his vessel, may be remoulded on a more beautiful plan; for instance, without either pipe or handle, the same materials which first formed these now constituting part of the general swell of the vase.

Who can tell what mighty principles and powers lie now undeveloped in our "vile bodies?" These will, doubtless, be unfolded as circumstances may require; just as the teeth in children do not appear till wanted. The prophetic eye of Heaven sees all things from the beginning onwards through eternity. The human body seems to have been originally formed on the anticipation of the fall; that man might be punished by its humiliating properties. Why not also with a view to its resurrection, and to still more distant and illustrious changes? We need not assure ourselves, that because the face of Christ, at the transfiguration, shone like the sun, therefore this exact kind of beauty must be that of the glorified body. The head is now, indeed, the seat and sign of intelligence; but we know that several of its features have a direct reference to physical nutrition; and though these at present are beautiful, because utility is their ground of beauty, yet why should we confidently anticipate their continuance in the future body? Is the "human face Divine" the highest possible perfection of its beauty? Has God himself exhausted the whole capacity of matter and of mind in this respect? and given in the resurrection-body, though raised in glory, the utmost extremes of his wisdom and power? Are there no ulterior forms, and colours, and mediums of expression, nothing beyond the mere types and analogies afforded by the present body, supposing that body were as perfect as we could imagine? May we not say of this subject, and still more of the mind, and of the universe at large, that we are just begun, as it were, to peruse some incomparable epic, or poetical narrative which has excited expectation and suspense; while the poet continues to give out his discoveries with a sparing hand, and we must read on before we can receive the perfect gratifica-

tion of the ultimate disclosures? It is by no means improbable, that new senses, new organs, and new displays of personal loveliness and glory may distinguish the body; and new abodes, and new employments suited to them, run parallel with such improvements, for ages in the progress of their ineffable perfection.

From the matter and the form we may pass to the other parts of the description furnished by St. Paul. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." From these words we may certainly infer, that it will be immortal; but probably the apostle meant more especially to show, that it will be invulnerable to every kind of molestation, disruption, and putrefaction; every kind of hostile attack, either from without or from within, which at present we might suppose to be the cause of pain, or weakness, or deformity. For the wicked, equally with good men, will be raised to immortality, but not to incorruption. "As is the earthy,"—that is, the earthy man Adam,—"such are they also that are earthy;" being descended from him. Their present corruptible bodies shall be returned to their unhappy souls, and shall be liable to all the painful forms of corruption; but the union between both shall be indissoluble, and the substance of both indestructible; just as matter at present, whether burnt or broken, or transmuted into air, or any other form, still maintains its existence, and its union with the immaterial laws by which it is governed; for instance, the law of gravitation.

"It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory." This word implies more than beauty of expression and proportion. It means excessive brightness and splendour. Of this glory we have an instance in our Lord's transfiguration, whose "face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." The same surpassing glory shall at last distinguish all his humble followers. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." And we may suppose the sun to be only a shadow, and a faint one, of the real glory which we shall then be strengthened to behold; when myriads of bodies shall stream upon the sight, each as far excelling the brightness of the sun, as his meridian effulgence now exceeds the twinkling of the glow-worm.

How this shall be produced, it is easy to conceive, as "all things are possible to God." It may be done by virtue of the

Holy Ghost within, letting out his power upon our substance, to illuminate his temple, which at present he permits to obscure the inward principle, as a dark lantern hides its light. Such are the capabilities of the risen body, actuated by the indwelling energy of God the Holy Ghost. It is rightly presumed, that we know but little of the properties of matter, even after all our modern discoveries respecting them. Time was, when none could have imagined that so dark a substance as charcoal should, by the electric or galvanic influence streaming through it, give out a light of extraordinary purity and splendour. Were we, for the first time, to turn our attention to the vegetative world, we never should expect, that from a small seed rotting in the ground, a lofty stalk, and beautiful foliage, and valuable fruit should be produced. The doctrine of the resurrection has also been illustrated with much propriety and elegance, by adverting to the sudden transformation of an insect into a being of very superior appearance, with splendid wings, and soaring with great swiftness through the air.

But the glory of the risen body will shine out, not only thus by virtue of the principle within, but also by means of a glorious irradiation from without. The innumerable orbs in this eternal firmament will receive, not merely on their surface, but into their inmost substance, as the deepest crystal is transpierced by beams of light, the ineffable glory of the unsetting "Sun of righteousness." "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." His glory, shining on us, will transform us into the likeness both of his glorified body, and of his holy and Divine mind. The real splendour of such a scene must infinitely surpass all possible conception.

"It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." This is, perhaps, the most sublime of the characters ascribed to the risen body. It seems, indeed, to imply all the rest; and to be their foundation, or at least the efficient cause of their existence. Spirituality, incorruption, and glory, are all indications of extraordinary power; not of the immediate power of God, (which also, we have seen, works upon it, and by it, and with it,) but of that which is strictly the imparted yet proper power of the lofty being who is still a mere creature.

The power of motion—of motion prompt, easy, and rapid beyond all conception, but perfectly obedient to the will of the

mind—is the least that can be reasonably affirmed of this property. Combined with this, is the ministry of angels; and, to complete the grand idea, the whole is crowned with the attendant power of God. Of this concurrence of active powers we have several instances in Scripture, particularly the translation of Elijah, and the ascension of our Lord. "They went up," and were "carried up," into heaven, both by their own intrinsic and by foreign power. From such unparalleled energy, the power of moving other substances may be easily inferred.

Judging from the resurrection-body of Christ, which is the model of our own, it may still farther be presumed, that, as soon as we rise from the grave, we shall possess a power of adapting the body to all the varying situations and transactions assigned to us; a power of expansion or of diminution; a power of being terrestrial or celestial; of assuming any form, organical or inorganical; and of engaging in actions and communications suited to this or to the heavenly world. There are not wanting analogies for this doctrine in the animated tribes; but our limits will not suffer us at present to adduce them. As we said before, the glorified body is, as we learn from several texts, essentially different from any form of body ever described or actually presented to our earthly consideration; angels themselves only taking human forms in accommodation to our ideas on such subjects; but not in their proper form possessed, as far as we can judge, of even any outward appearance of the organs of nutrition. It is also no small evidence of power, that both angels, and our Lord after his resurrection, should perform the act of eating, and transmute such gross aliment into their own spiritual substance; for this must be admitted, because the fact was real, and not merely apparent.

And what power must be allowed to the senses of the future body? As, in our common judgment, it is the whole soul that thinks, or feels, or acts; and not one part that thinks, and another that feels or acts; may we not as reasonably conjecture, that the spiritual body, though possessed of particular senses, can, at will, be all eye, or all ear, as circumstances may require? And St. Augustine seems to think, that as Elisha saw Gehazi, though absent from him, by the force of the mind, without the medium of material vision; so, on the other hand, the power of seeing, in the resurrection-body, may be such as to discern spirits in their own proper substance; and that, in this high sense,

the "pure in heart" may literally "see God;" as present with them, in a manner quite peculiar and ineffable, and as wholly present, in whatever point of space they may exercise this amazing faculty of sight. But immeasurable strength, we may suppose, will attach to every organ and exertion of the future body. It is not to be imagined that the "sons of God" should be surpassed in power by unredeemed angels, their servants and inferiors; yet one of these could smite with death, in one night, a hundred and eighty-five thousand armed men of the Assyrians.

Such are some of the scriptural and probable ideas, which may be profitably indulged, on this most interesting subject of the resurrection-body. To see it in its best and fullest light, and to feel it, if possible, in the whole of its conceivable amount and weight, it would be necessary to collect, and compact into one clear and harmonious system, all the texts of Scripture which make undoubted reference to it; not forgetting the illustrative examples of Elijah, of angels to whom the children of the resurrection are compared, but, above all, the risen body of our Lord; to study these inestimable hints as a whole; and going no farther into the field of conjecture than severe interpretation, and the cautious use of reason, may tolerate or suggest. A similar plan of inquiry may be adopted with good effect on any other branch of the general subject; and if the interest taken in such questions be personal, and deepened in the mind by meditation and prayer, a safer and more certain road to truth on subjects so awfully important, but somewhat darkened by obscurity, or a more useful and ennobling exercise of our powers of reflection, can scarcely be conceived.

IV. The next great change, or rather manifold changes, of the redeemed saint, will take place when, after judgment, he shall ascend to that eternal heaven where the throne of God is set, and his kingdom is prepared for those who love him. The judgment itself can hardly be considered as a change. It is rather the judicial recognition of all the mighty revolutions, past and future, which will then be so deeply interesting to the righteous.

This final state of things is, from its characters of extreme perfection, and of eternity, by far the most important of any we have yet considered. But because of those very characters, it admits of the fewest observations concerning it, being placed inconceivably beyond the reach of our conceptions. The greater

part, however, of what has been already said bears directly upon it, as showing the materials and preparations of body, soul, and local state, requisite to form this last and best economy,—the government and plans of God in their maturity and consummation.

The order of proceedings in that eternal state appears to be the following:—Death,—a state of rest in paradise,—the last trumpet,—the resurrection of the faithful,—a change on those who remain of the living,—the rising of the wicked,—the judgment,—the righteous caught up into the air,—the world and the wicked on fire,—and, lastly, the ascension of Christ, and of the whole army of saints and angels, from the clouds, to make their glorious entrance into "the kingdom of God."

From all that is revealed concerning that eternal abode, we may affirm with confidence, that neither, on the one hand, is it merely spiritual and visionary, or what is called "a state;" nor, on the other, is it grossly material, and imperfectly constructed, like our present earth. The expressions "country," "kingdom," "city," "mansions," are neither wholly metaphorical, nor altogether literal; but indicate some tangible residence, inhabited by distinguishable individuals in a social condition. Of the whole universe, which is the temple of the Deity, this heaven may properly be termed "the holy of holies," or most holy place; where is the manifestation of the Divine presence, called the "throne of the Majesty in the heavens;" and where at "the right hand of God," the Saviour, in his glorified body, now intercedes for men. This is the "restitution of all things;"—the true "Canaan" promised to the father of the faithful; who, as his spiritual seed, are, in this highest sense, "made heirs of the world." As this "heaven of heavens" is now in existence, it would seem that the "new heavens and new earth," mentioned by St. Peter, do not, as some have supposed, imply a new world formed from the ashes of the old. It must, however, be a world of material objects suited to the glorified organs and senses of the resurrection-body; otherwise, the resurrection could not be magnified as "the manifestation of the sons of God;" their "glorious liberty;" and their "adoption."

It is in this blessed state the soul attains to that perfect glorification of which in paradise, we suppose, it was not yet susceptible. This will consist in the elevation of its powers, considered in themselves, and in its union with the body.

We have already made some observations on the soul, as greatly strengthened and enlarged, when speaking of the intermediate state. But this improvement, we may judge, will be vastly exceeded in the eternal kingdom. There knowledge and the understanding, incapable of error, will act and re-act upon each other, with an energy unparalleled; mutually producing an extension of both, and unceasing in this increase. The holiest and the strongest charities of the saint will centre themselves in God; but they will also reflect their fires upon the whole brotherhood of the redeemed. The will, in all its choices and determinations, must be perfect and successful; and, what may seem to be impossible, it will be free and yet infallible. In the highest degree this is the character of God himself; who is most free to choose always that which is best; and who, for this very reason, is incapable of sinning. This freedom is a grand perfection, and the image of it he bestows as a gift upon his children in their state of full and indefectible resemblance of their Father. But holiness will be their noblest assimilation to God; and will be their highest fitness for beholding him. The power and delight of vision are founded in conformity between the faculty and its object; and, in heaven, the latter will eternally purify and strengthen the former.

The risen body will be the perfect instrument of the soul; nay, more, it will be an essential part of the celestial man; complete now in his consciousness, as well as in his fitness for the noblest employment, manual as well as mental. This is the least that can be said, if a body be required at all. The intermediate state was in one sense unnatural, and, so far as defect extended, the consequence of sin; for had there been no sin, there would have been no death. But now in heaven the powers of the mind begin also to experience a sort of resurrection. The saint may be supposed to feel surprise and pleasure at this new birth of the soul; just as he who was blind but has his sight restored, or whose vision, suddenly assisted by the telescope, beholds new wonders in the starry heavens; in some such manner as he finds the actual measurement of his being, so to speak, enlarged, and feels a joy unknown before. Similar, but happier, will be the change in the glorified saint. His powers of thought and of sensation; of the enjoyment of the whole scenery around; of worship, but especially of engaging in the lofty exercise of praise, must be astonishingly increased and perfected by this union

of the soul with the body. But as the former in its nature is far nobler and more capacious than the latter, even in heaven it may, at pleasure, as we experience in this life, employ its powers abstractedly, and possess some higher satisfactions than any that could arise in consequence of its connexion with the body.

Heaven must also be the utmost perfection of the social state. On this subject our conceptions are assisted by the assumption of the body, as being the medium of communication with which we are best acquainted; for, we cannot (though we admit the fact) so easily imagine, as before observed, how disembodied spirits should have any correspondence with each other; whether by sight, or sound, or through any other medium. Language with us is in no small degree founded on necessity, arising from the ignorance, and dulness, and wickedness of man. In other respects it is in itself a source of much pleasure, and an admirable mode of fostering and interchanging virtuous and pious affections. In these respects, and in these alone, we may conjecture, it will be employed by the citizens of heaven. The perfect knowledge they must have of minds,—what we should call "the discernment of spirits;" their adequate comprehension and feeling of the subjects of their contemplation; their accurate perception of all possible signs of such subjects, or methods of imparting and receiving the knowledge of them; their absolute command of all the bodily organs fitted for this conveyance; and, above all, the power of God, which, we have seen, works in eternity by a constant succession of what we now call "miracles," must enable them to fall at once into a language, universal or various, just as may be proper, but not from necessity, either to augment their own felicity, or to advance the Divine glory. But articulated language, such as we now speak, if used at all, may not be their only language. It is not, indeed, the only, or in all respects the best, language which we ourselves possess. Painting, music, the countenance, action, and the mathematical sciences, are all so many dialects, each of which has its peculiar excellence in giving light and power to the subjects they express. Heaven may be justly thought to furnish an infinity of superior means. But in that world of perfection, knowledge may neither be acquired nor conveyed by trains of reasoning and discourse. These objects will probably be gained by more summary plans; by most rapid accumulations of intuitive perceptions; all expressed in the praises of God, and in

their mutual interchange of friendship, by methods too wonderful, too lofty for our present comprehension.

But, whatever be the modes of their fellowship, we are sure that heaven must be essentially a social state ; one vast fraternity of souls, all actuated by one spirit of sublime affection ; sweet, and strong, and generous, infinitely beyond what we can now anticipate. What must that friendship be which binds countless myriads of holy and illustrious intelligences in one perfect band of brotherhood ; and pours the whole extent of its collective knowledge, and love, and power, into a common stock, which each may call his own ? and which, not in fiction, but in absolute reality, he appropriates and enjoys ; enjoys it the more because the rest do not on this account enjoy the less, but from this very circumstance augment the tide of their enjoyments ; as if the blessedness and even the being of all were summed up in every single soul ? Here individual existence seems lost in that of the public, as a drop in the ocean ; as a star in the infinity of stars which constitute the unbroken light of what is called " the galaxy." All are one, and one is all. O happy day ! when, in the company of all the prophets, and apostles, and celebrated saints of ancient times, we shall retrace the history, and sound the depths, and see the grand results, and sing the still-increasing glories of redemption ; the great " multitude, which no man could number, crying with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

It has frequently been questioned, whether saints who have enjoyed friendship together in this world will recognise each other in that heavenly association, the whole frame of society being so widely different from every thing we now experience. The principal argument against this supposition is, that our friendships here are comparatively trivial, and will there, most probably, be forgotten in the far nobler bond of universal benevolence. But universals consist of particulars ; and he, for example, who is possessed of genuine philanthropy cannot be incapable of the narrower affections of domestic and of social life. This, no doubt, is the invariable tendency of the larger affection, whatever be the apparent exceptions arising from the inconsistency of men at present. Impressions arising from the view of immensity do not naturally dispose the mind to contemn the examination of the minute objects which immensity includes, except those objects are really undeserving of regard. He who

loves to look at nature on her grandest scale, is no less pleased to stoop from his height, and to admire the nearer and almost imperceptible parts, each of which contributes to the extent of the scale.

It is difficult to conceive how the final judgment should be managed, without a distinct recollection on our part of all the characters with whom we have associated, and all the transactions in which we have been engaged; and this seems to include a recognition of our relatives and friends. The objection seems, also, inconsistent with that perfect knowledge of all men, and of all things, which we presume will be possessed by the citizens of heaven, whose boundless intercourse, we think, must furnish, to complete this knowledge, the delighted recollection of our friendships here below. St. Augustine says, "In heaven, all shall be known by each; and each be known by all."

Besides, the extinction of our virtuous friendships would appear, not only to do violence to the social principle so essential to our nature, but we may justly suppose it would also wipe from our remembrance innumerable causes of special thankfulness and praise to God, and of gratitude to others, connected with our spiritual advancement on earth. We need not check our fondness for the supposition, because we can hardly surmise by what signs, or other means, the celestial inhabitants shall attain to this reciprocal knowledge, whether from inspiration, or immediate revelation, or mutual communication. The fact itself must interest us most; and we may confidently leave both it, and the means of its accomplishment, to Him who will do "all things well." Luther infers it from the circumstance, that Adam knew Eve the moment he beheld her. Lazarus knew Abraham; and the apostles seem to have come to the knowledge of Moses and Elias, on the mount of transfiguration, by the same power of intuitive apprehension.

Among the several texts which seem to bear upon this question, the strongest, perhaps, is that of St. Paul, where he says, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." How could this be affirmed, unless he believed that he should know his converts? In this sense both Macknight and Paley most decidedly interpret the words of the apostle.

We must, however, keep in mind, that in that blessed world

we shall know and love one another, not so much because of the friendship and relation which formerly subsisted amongst us, as on account of the knowledge and holiness which we possessed. All friendship inconsistent with benevolence and piety must perish with the present life.

But infinitely far above the joy even of this amazing friendship must be that of seeing God "face to face." This is now the privilege of angels, and will then, in the same angelic sense, be that of saints. It is called by divines "the beatific, or the blissful, vision." "To see God," is the simplest language that can be conceived. It is expressive, notwithstanding, of a subject that exceeds our utmost stretch of thought. It is not difficult to imagine how we may see our Saviour in his glorified humanity; but the nature of the vision by which we shall see God, who is a spirit, and who fills all space with his own eternal essence, may well be supposed to surpass our comprehension. Our present experience may, perhaps, furnish us with some slight analogies; but the exact kind of vision, and, above all, the great extent to which it may go, "what angel-tongue can tell?" If it imply, that we should "see God by the eye of the mind," there must be some high and supernatural sense of mental sight intended; otherwise, why should the privilege be represented as peculiar to heaven? For, in the obvious sense of intellectual vision, or of "seeing God by faith," we have now that privilege on earth.

We are sure, however, that it must comprise the most enlarged and just, the most accurate and unclouded, discoveries of God and his perfections; producing, of course, such a perfect conviction of his greatness, goodness, holiness, and nearness to the soul, as could not be fixed upon the understanding in this world, where outward objects far more sensibly affect us than the presence of God; who, we are always naturally inclined to think, is not immediately investing us and in us, but above all nature, and, as it were, beholding us from some vast distance. And corresponding impressions must be made upon the soul. For instance: New strength to our vision, and increased love to God, which will give both sensibility and capacity to receive a still deeper sense of his majesty and grace,—a sense communicated by himself, in such revelations of his love to us, and in such touches of his power, as will amount to a more absolute

manifestation of his presence than belongs to the vision of our faith on earth.

And more than this: The mind shall see God in all things; or, to speak, perhaps, more justly, shall see all things in God. For, he is the universal Agent: "In him we live, and move, and have our being." All creatures are but as small dependent particles of existence, swimming, if we may use the expression, in the illimitable sea of His essential life. But do men seem to know this? Just the contrary. Earth and sky to them seem all things, and God is scarcely adverted to; and when at any time we turn our attention to him, it is only with a transient glance, as if we thought his existence but secondary, shadowy, and even doubtful. Some ideal being called "Nature," is their idol; and this idol is only worshipped when the sensual mind lifts itself, with some effort, above its grosser pursuits. This Nature is the sovereign of their little world—of what just strikes their senses. But they think not of a Power behind the throne greater than the throne itself.

It will be otherwise in heaven, where nothing in the whole scale of creation can be seen but as issuing from God, sustained by God, reflecting God, and full of God. Creation then will have nothing to entertain us apart from God himself. God —the manifest God—will be all in all. We shall, no doubt, be charmed to behold the pictures of his perfections; but we shall see them in the presence of the inimitable originals, and, with ineffable awe and wonder, contemplate the resemblance; and then, with rapturous worship, give the praise, not to the shadow, but to the Living, the Infinite Substance, — the Supreme.

Some evidence of this inseparable union between God and his works may be found in our present state; first, when we bring the mind directly to the question, and, in the light of revelation and of reason, make it the subject of devout reflection; and, secondly, when, under certain circumstances, and without thought on our part, it seems to force itself on our attention, by touching, not so much the reflective, as the sensitive, powers of the soul. This is sometimes instinctively felt in the conscience, in the fears, and in the affections; by the view of a place of worship, by solemn music, and especially by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart. It is, perhaps, on the same principle that all extraordinary instances of the greatness of

creative power affect the mind with a peculiar sense of the sublime; such as thunder, tremendous rocks, and the ocean. In viewing mountain-scenery, for example, it seems as if the whole had just been flung from the hand of Omnipotence, and as if we possessed, not a mere conviction, but a sensible impression, of some awful Presence, filling the whole region, and looking with a majestic satisfaction on the lofty temple he had formed for himself. It is not the visible creature, but the invisible Creator, that gives that delightful swell to the soul, which is the homage he extorts even from the unreflecting mind, and is exclusively his glory and his due: "Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks; unto thee do we give thanks: For that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare." How infinitely superior, how much more direct, and bright, and penetrating must be the manifestations of God in his eternal kingdom!—"For, now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now," the apostle adds, "I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

That in heaven there will be different degrees of glory, is clear from the parable of the talents, which represents some saints as rulers over five cities, and some as rulers over ten. It is also fairly deducible from the regulated progress of minds in this world, and the various and proportioned privileges which God in his providence and grace has annexed to it. As M. Bonnet, of Geneva, has observed, there are no breaks, no leaps in our advancement. Every stage of improvement was determined as to the kind and measure of that improvement by the preceding stage, and itself determines that which follows. Our knowledge and holiness, together with the amount of our rewardable obedience, will, at death, form the starting-point of our unending career. The Judge at last "will reward every man according to his works;" the wicked in pure justice; the righteous gratuitously, but still according—in proportion—to their works. Dr. Macknight seems to think, that the saints after judgment will be caught up in clouds, that is, in "bands," as he translates it, or in companies; and if this opinion be correct, it may seem to intimate, that they will be classed according to their characters and destinies; and thus, as if in perfect military order, but not "clad in burning arms," and exhibiting a magnificent variety, ascend in due succession to take their proper places in the heavenly world.

That there will be such degrees of glory, appears to be quite certain; but it can hardly be said, that this implies degrees of happiness, and this for several reasons. In the first place, every vessel, as is commonly expressed, will be filled to the extent of its capacity; and secondly, the happiness of all, as we have said, will be the happiness of each. There is another sense, perhaps, in which equality combines with these degrees of glory; and it is this, that, in the eternal race of advancement, the last, we may suppose, is always preparing to take the place occupied at any given moment by the first. And though in this case it is certain he can never overtake him, because the improvement is supposed to be universal and uniform; yet we may affirm, that an eternal progress, both in glory and in happiness, is destined for the whole, even for him who is "least in the kingdom of heaven." In limited duration the difference is real and marked; could our view embrace eternal, that difference would be lost.

The employment of heaven must be suited to the loftiness of our glorified powers, of our companionship, and of the magnificent abode allotted to us as the scene which we shall traverse. To acquire new knowledge, especially of God and his perfections, as incomparably imaged out in the plan of redemption; to make new discoveries of his greatness and his goodness in the works of creation; to perform new services, at his command, upon a wide and still-extending scale; to advance in many various and unimaginable ways the happiness of others, as the surest method there, as it was on earth, of adding to our own; to hold immediate intercourse with God, as a man does, in equal and alternate responses, and embosomed, with his friend; to put forth new acts of love to him in the sublimest workings of the mind; and to celebrate himself, and the wonders of his love, and power, and grace, in new anthems of praise, sung variously, but harmoniously, by innumerable myriads at once:— These employments, and others probably, of which at present we can form no conception, may seem to exercise the whole of their powers, throughout the whole of their eternity.

The perfection of that state, even in its commencement, undoubtedly transcends all that eye has seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived; and this perfection will increase for ever. Here the cup of our enjoyment, while it yields the sweetest draughts,—draughts that satiate, and, instead of intoxi-

eating, strengthen and improve,—increases the thirst of him who drinks; and has in itself a perennial fountain, to satisfy still more and more. Here flowers are plucked, unmatched in our terrestrial Eden, and others of surpassing richness spring up instantly to fill their places; and Amaranth is the universal name of their infinite varieties; for, growing freshness, and a still more vivid greenness, will eternally increase and gratify the desire of enjoying them.

Each single and minuter part of the detail which in this discourse we have so slightly and so hastily surveyed, seems alone to present an inexhaustible store of wonders to the astonished mind. But let these be viewed in combination; let it be imagined how the soul, ennobled and expanded, and placed amidst unbounded scenes of glory, is capable of forming just and holy, grand and burning wishes for herself; and let us add, that these, as they succeed each other in ceaseless succession, shall be perfectly gratified the moment they arise; and that the very faculty of wishing will eternally increase in strength and fruitfulness, every instance of enjoyment giving birth to new and higher wishes;—let all these considerations unite in the mind, and we shall probably possess the most sublime conception of happiness which we can form until we pass into the heaven itself to which it refers.

But we must come to a close, though somewhat abruptly; having gone beyond the bounds we had prescribed to this discourse. The unparalleled importance of the subject must be evident, however, even to the inattentive reader of this very imperfect sketch. No subject within the range of truth, or of the vast and various interests of mankind, might be so readily expected to make its own application, and to fix itself directly on the understanding and the judgment, and by this means on the heart. If the powerful, if the awful motives which it presents do not practically influence the conscience of the man who admits their authority, what conceivable incentives of any other kind can possibly affect him? And what greater proof than this can be adduced, to show the necessity of some superhuman agency, such as that of which the Gospel is the instrument, to produce a true moral and religious change on sinful men? The people of God themselves, indeed, though the subjects of this grace, and consciously entitled to all the indescribable glories of which we have been speaking, are not in

general sufficiently impressed by the prospect of this happiness; a fact which strengthens the argument adduced from our insensibility, to prove the important doctrine of our original depravity.

There are, however, many striking exceptions among Christians. Such are those who live habitually by faith, and not by sight. To them, and to all who are travelling to the heavenly Zion, we would strongly recommend a still more anxious and intense regard to this great subject,—the goal of all their exertions, and the sum of all their expectations. Let the prospect wean us from this world, and urge us to prepare for heaven. For "we have no continuing city here." Nor ought this to affect us with the least regret, while we look for an eternal city, whose builder and maker is God. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Let us also take the strong consolation which the subject ceaselessly and copiously supplies, amidst the poverty and personal afflictions of our present state. God has ordered that we should have "our evil things" in this short, uncertain life; and should advance upon the scale of existence in the final attainment of "good things," where all shall be eternal. This gradation will itself exceedingly increase our happiness. O how the height will be enjoyed and prized, when we look down through all the low and lofty degrees by which we then shall have ascended! The contrast will unspeakably augment our joy, and double, as it were, the extreme of our real elevation. But we must wait in hope. "That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." We are now low among the orders of created beings, that from this very circumstance we may be at last the higher; as an arrow pressed far down upon the string will reach a higher point than could have been attained had the pressure been much less.

A few more pangs or privations, and the saints may sing out, "Farewell, poverty, and sickness, and deformity! farewell, this dungeon-world! its grossness, its meanness, and 'the filthy conversation of the wicked' who are imprisoned in it! And welcome now, a more congenial clime, and more congenial society! for we 'are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of

angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel!' Then let discontent and murmuring have no place amongst us, 'but rather giving of thanks.' 'Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.'"

But our consolation is, in some respects, if we may so express it, peculiarly definite, and personal, and tangible. It is sweet and healing, nay, cheering, under the painful loss of Christian friends by death, to consider, according to the statements and reflections we have made, that their mortal struggles are now for ever at an end; that they are with God and happy spirits, enjoying felicity; and that soon, very soon, we shall see and know them again, in our perfect and inseparable union with them. By this means we are in some sense, even now, identified with eternity. We have already taken possession, in the persons of our friends; and our earthly ties and interests are so far diminished. A part of our treasure, as it were, is gone before us; and though our bodies still remain behind, our best hopes and affections are gone with it. In that new world the mother will again embrace her loved, lamented child; the son, his long-remembered parent. And the widow there shall weep no more, for there no more shall she be known by the saddening name of "widow." All those who have taken sweet counsel together, in the way to that celestial house of God, shall renew their ancient and consecrated intercourse,

> "With some peculiar and immortal friendship."

Let this delightful doctrine, then, prevent all passionate and indecent wishes and assertions, sometimes uttered by inconsiderate persons, on the loss of their relations; and in all such trials let us comfort one another with these words,—that we shall soon be together, and for ever, with the Lord.

But let us constantly return to the instruction which, in reference to practice, these pages urge upon us. Nothing, indeed, can be more loudly enforced by this subject; nothing, nothing

can be more absolutely necessary, more in character with our professions, more wise and prudent, more honourable and consistent, or indeed more truly philosophical, than this ;—that entertaining such high hopes, and being consciously on the eve of such stupendous revolutions, such illustrious and momentous changes, —for they are "ready to be revealed in the last time," ready now to burst upon us in a moment,—we should maintain our title to them unimpaired and unobscured to the last ; should ever seek a perfect meetness for them ; and should watch, with unremitting diligence, and with anxious hope, for the actual commencement of them.

Let the sinner also be instructed and awakened by the views we have advanced on this great subject. Let him consider how nearly, how vastly those blessed changes concern him ; with what unparalleled imprudence and madness he is bartering this immense, this immortal happiness, for sensual and sordid pleasures ;—pleasures which in their consequences are as ruinous, as in their nature they are mean, and beastly, and disgraceful. An interminable prospect of glory and felicity is here presented to him, and purchased for him, and he sells the whole birth-right for a mess of pottage ; and this too, with the certainty, that, as soon as the pottage is disposed of, he must be doomed to suffer the very opposite of all this happiness in the hopeless pains of damnation.

Let him likewise reflect upon the palpable inconsistency of living chiefly for the body, while he takes the most direct and certain means of preventing its glorious renovation, in that world of felicity to which he is invited ; and of perpetuating its corruption, and odiousness, and misery. Or, if he be a man of intellectual taste and fancy, let him know, that he is no less at variance with himself, in doating on the beauties, real and ideal, of this transient world,—whether in the magnificent displays of visible nature, in the walks of art and of polished life, or in the magical creations of poetry and romance,—if, in the meantime, he dashes from the grasp of his infatuated mind all that conceivable and all that unimaginable loveliness and glory of which we have been speaking. Let him also remember, that if our doctrine of the intermediate state be true, he may, in a very few days, or even hours, mingle with a world of spirits ; or if it be not true, he must—because unconsciousness cannot be calculated—pass instantly from his dying chamber to

the judgment-seat of Christ, and hear at once the sounding of the trumpet, and listen to the sentence that consigns him to an unchangeable eternity. Above all, let him remember, the decree is passed: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And let him—if yet happily he will consider—have immediate recourse to the atoning blood for pardon, and for grace to make him "pure in heart," that he may "see God."

TRUE GREATNESS:

A SERMON

PREACHED IN WESLEY CHAPEL, LIVERPOOL,

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16TH, 1832,

ON OCCASION OF

THE SUDDEN DEATH

OF

THE REV. ADAM CLARKE, LL.D. F.A.S. &c.

"To be a true Christian is not a work of opinion, but of greatness of mind."
ST. IGNATIUS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The fear of falling much beneath the weighty subject of the following Discourse would have prevented its appearance, but for the wish to discharge some portion of the debt of gratitude which the writer owes to the memory of the venerable minister whose character he has attempted to describe, and the unanimous request of his brethren of both circuits, who were of opinion, that Liverpool ought not to be without its local tribute of respect to the deceased, whose labours in that town had been at all times received with much acceptance, and frequently attended with eminent success.

With all its defects,—and of these none can be more sensible than himself,—the author presumes to inscribe it to the surviving family and friends of that extraordinary man, as a well-meant endeavour at once to do some honour to his name, and to render the subject subservient to the instruction of the reader. He may just add, that personal indisposition was the principal reason why the publication has been so long delayed.

SERMON VII.

He shall be great in the sight of the Lord.—Luke i. 15.

A thing is said to be true when it answers to some rule or standard with which it is compared. Thus, a portrait is true if the likeness be exact; or in other words, it is only by the original that we can judge of the resemblance. A circle is true if it answer to the definition,—that all its parts are equally distant from the centre; and our text is a true translation if it faithfully represent the meaning of St. Luke. We may add, that, in deliberately forming a judgment of the opinions, or dispositions, or actions, of any man, the mind is naturally disposed to look round for some intelligible and decisive law or example, by which it may come to a speedy and a satisfactory conclusion.

It is also obvious, that, in every case, the rule itself should be a proper one. It should be accurate: A false rule would be worse than nothing, would only deceive us, adding error to our ignorance. How, for instance, should one crooked line detect the exact degree of obliquity in another? It must also be suited to the nature of the subject; as, for example, it would be no less unjust than absurd to judge of the life and actions of a peasant by the rules of public duty peculiar to a prince. And if we have to judge of any man by several rules, applicable to the several characters and relations in which he stands, we ought to give our principal attention to that rule which is superior to the rest, which includes all the others, and which ought to maintain the supreme dominion over them. This transcendent, this unquestionable rule is the will of God revealed in the Scriptures.

Before we speak of greatness, let us illustrate what we have said, by inquiring how the rule ascertains true morality. A man "without Christ, and without God in the world," may

still be possessed of natural affection, and of a natural sense of justice; and he may act on both so as to obtain the name of "a benevolent and honest," and of even "an honourable man." But he may also become a truly spiritual person; loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, in obedience to God. These two states of mind, when carefully examined, are distinguished by the widest difference, and have nothing in common but the deceptive similitude of certain outward actions. In the former, the individual acted merely in accordance with the law of nature, supposing him indeed to have observed the dictates of that law; and so far we may grant, by way of distinction, that his morality was real; but, in strictness of speech, it was not true morality, because it failed when tried at the supreme court of appeal, when measured by the best of rules,—the standard of the Gospel. It was morality of a certain kind, and possessed an important but temporary value, and we cannot justly refuse to call it by that name; still, as it was destitute of the higher motive, and spirit, and extent, which God requires, it could not, in His judgment, be genuine or true.

When brought to the test, it was, indeed, something, but not the thing required; and was, therefore, in that respect, absolutely nothing. For truth consists in a perfect correspondence between the sign and the thing signified; and a failure here is to the same effect as if that which fails had no existence at all. Hence the expression "true," in some languages, implies "reality, solidity, intensity, or a state of existence," in opposition to empty sounds and pretensions. And that mere morality thus fails, entirely fails, is evident from the single observation,—that justice, for instance, is due to all intelligences; and that he who, though he pays his debts to man, yet withholds from God his heart and his obedience, so justly due, breaks the general principle, and so far vitiates every act and feeling of his moral life, is only comparable to him who pays his debts indeed when law and decency require, but in other instances can pilfer the property of his neighbour. Hence, "true virtue," or the holiness which God enjoins, is a phrase sometimes used by our most eminent divines to imply, as their observations show, that there is virtue, justly so denominated, but which, notwithstanding, is by no means true virtue.

In like manner, it is proper we should judge of the several

kinds of greatness according to the different standards adapted to those kinds. A man may, in a very just sense, be called "a great philosopher, or statesman, or poet," who is not possessed of true greatness; that greatness of which one essential principle, as we shall show, is "true holiness." The word of God is as properly the standard of greatness as it is of moral goodness; the two things being in some respects not two, but strictly one and the same. In both cases it is the supreme law; unequivocal, indisputable, and in all respects incomparable. And when the great men of this world reject it, they not only by this means deprive themselves of many noble properties essential to true greatness, and thus contract the scale on which their mind is constructed; they also allow that kind of greatness which they do possess to be shrivelled up and weakened by rejecting the omnipotent assistance of grace; such assistance as would mightily exalt and strengthen all their powers of mind. The greatness, however, which answers to the Divine rule, not only differs from that which is often most applauded by the world, but, as to some of its principles and characters, is perfectly opposed to it, has not the least appearance of it, and in the eyes of many is considered as the very essence of all that is mean and despicable. In the midst of such conflicting claims, and in the danger of yielding to the enchantment of impositions, we shall do well to yield ourselves implicitly to an infallible instructer.

Behold, then, not in the flattering position of appearances, but in the undisturbed light of revelation, how miserably weak, how contemptibly degraded, is the "natural man;" the man who "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God!" Such persons, however in the language of this world they may be magnified, are nothing more than animal men; and their highest wisdom, at least as to their purpose in the study of it, is "earthly, sensual, and devilish."

But what is the language of God respecting them? He rejects them, he despises them, he mocks them; he calls them "fools," and "slaves," and "children of the devil." In his comparisons they are "dust," and "barren heath," and "stubble;" and, as Bishop Beveridge quotes the texts, "beasts that perish, hogs, and dogs;" descriptions which are more than justified by "the beggarly elements," the degrading character and tendency of sinful pursuits. And if man himself be deemed an authority as his own

historian, we find that, whether in that office he pronounce or pervert the truth, the evidence in either case confirms the judgment of his Maker.

From this unquestionable evidence, supplied by the confessions of the party as to the facts of the case, and by the righteous "Judge of all the earth" as to the nature of those facts, it is clear that the unregenerate man is any thing but truly great, whether as to the qualities of his mind, or the condition of his life. His ignorance is pitiful. He yields with despicable cowardice to the tyranny of vice and selfishness. He has no power either to waken up the necessary breeze, or to still the tempest of his passions. A piece of news can sadden his heart, and cause his knees to tremble, in the midst of his revellings; his most favourite and best-concerted schemes are liable every moment to be ruined by some accident; and his life, together with his wealth and honours, his genius and his confidence, is at the mercy of the uncertain elements around him. And, what aggravates his degradation, and shows him in the extreme of littleness, is the pride of his heart, in arrogating to himself, amid such proofs of his disgrace, the character of greatness. Thus "vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." And God has decreed to consummate his ignominy and the mortification of his vanity; for, after "glorying in his shame," he shall be "filled with shame for glory."

Yet, amidst this devastation we see in the faculties, and in what are termed "the virtues, of the natural man," the shadows of departed greatness. And if those who attribute dignity to human nature, only meant that he contains within himself the materials capable of true grandeur, but requires no less an agency than that which laid the foundations of the world, to form them into a temple fit for God to dwell in, we should deem the sentiment not only safe, but highly instructive. This, indeed, was the glory of man in innocence; but the building is ruined and despoiled of its beauty; and nothing can be more erroneous than to mistake the fragments, so lamentably mutilated and scattered in the dust, for the finished fabric; or, which is to the same effect, to fancy, that by the masonry of reason and of resolution, without the help of God, they may yet be restored in all their just proportions, and perfectly answerable to their original intentions.

As man is, then, still capable of greatness; as the fall neither caused the extinction of his being, nor its transformation into stone, but left him in the full possession of the human nature; so he naturally grasps, though with mis-directed hands, at the greatness he has lost. It is true, he seeks it where he cannot find it; still he seeks it. He seeks, indeed, some miserable appearance of it; but even in this he seeks the substance, not knowing where to find it; and when the thing itself is presented to him, with a proud and stupid unbelief he turns away, and flies to find it in the opposite direction. But, to be great, at least, in some fictitious sense of the expression, or to enjoy the reputation, the companionship, and the rewards of greatness, seems to be one object of his anxious desire. Even the idler, "whose god is his belly," and who scorns at greatness, thinks by this very means to give you proof that he is great. It is, therefore, highly necessary that such persons should be freed, if possible, from this enchantment, should be taught to quench the deceitful lights of their own perverted reason and imagination before the lamp of truth. This is the more important, because the punishment of pride and vain-glory may, in this life, but will, beyond all doubt, in the day of judgment, be most signal and extraordinary. The aspiring sinner will unquestionably find, that, in proportion to the force of his effort, and the height of his aim, will be the astounding stroke of the Divine resistance, and the depth and ruin of his downfall: "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

On the other hand, he is already great, ennobled in the very thought and purpose of his mind, who, by the grace of God, has commenced the pursuit of that perfect and surpassing greatness for which, as we have already noticed, man was originally intended, and which the Gospel, for the second and the last time, has placed within his reach.

In that renowned man whom we justly call "the great apostle," we have an example truly glorious, of a well-instructed and determined candidate in this most honourable, but difficult, career. He burns with more than mortal ardour, even in the midst of his accumulating toils; and seems to think the crown of an emperor is but dust in the balance, to the farther greatness which awaits his perseverance. Listen to the heroic sentiments which burst from his soul as he resolutely urges on his way:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Do we now feel some spark of this Divine ambition to be great? Yes; and nothing shall extinguish it. All things shall fan and nourish it; for we ourselves are called to join the lists; and the noble object which fires the soul of an apostle is held up as the animating signal to our efforts: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." Then, in the name of God, let us take our measures cautiously; in his abundant strength, let us maintain them firmly.

On the subject of true greatness, it may be useful to enter into several more distinct and particular inquiries; and to show in what it properly consists, its source as in God, the means by which it is obtained, and how important and inspiring are certain examples of it which have shone forth in the church.

I. In the first place, let us fix our aim, and endeavour to determine the principles and parts in which true greatness consists.

The word "great," used here by St. Luke, is one of very frequent occurrence, and is, of course, the more likely to have acquired a variety of senses. Though in several texts of Scripture it is applied to men, yet, judging from its literal signification, we learn, that, like many other terms, it was at first derived from the mere objects of sense. In the judgment of celebrated scholars, it is a negative expression, and simply means "not the earth," that is, not so low as to be almost identified with the ground; if applied to animals, "not creeping, cringing, grovelling." Its import is precisely expressed by the word "sublime," which means "height." Hence it is used, together with the corresponding term in the Old Testament, to signify, not ordinary buildings, but those which are lofty, such as palaces and towers.

Greatness, as applied to mind, is an obvious instance of figurative language, and has thus been used by all people in all ages. Hence these texts: "Thy righteousness, O God, is

very high." "Great men are not always wise." "Blessed art thou, my son David; thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail." "Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." Here greatness is applied to rectitude, to wisdom, to actions, and to feelings both of joy and sorrow; of all which the seat and subject is nothing of external magnitude, and worth, and splendour, but the viewless, conscious mind.

The same figurative language is applied to those principles of truth, those noble subjects of reflection, and those elevating influences which, while they are intrinsically great, give true greatness to the soul. St. Augustine supposes, that, when the apostle says, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth," his view is not confined to heaven, but refers to the great truths of religion to be known in this life, and by which we are excited to aspire to heaven. And he adds: "They are called 'things above,' because they are incomparably more excellent than the affairs of this lower world." All these lofty subjects are included by Jehovah when he says, "As the heavens are higher than the earth; so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." And the line which we may fancy to run upwards from the earth, through infinite space, can have no conceivable termination of its height.

The same things, with the same view of their greatness, we likewise call "profound;" they are the "deep things of God." For the same reason David says, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." The utmost limits of created being are too narrow to express the magnitude of "the things that belong to the Lord," and which (blessed be his name!) belong, also, to our peace. The sacred writers sometimes exhaust the whole imagery of material greatness, and of illimitable space itself, in their magnanimous attempts to "grasp the Infinite," to comprehend the unfathomable mysteries of His kingdom: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." With what unrivalled sublimity does the great apostle pray!—"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." What are all the splendid actions, dazzling fictions, and philosophical speculations of worldly men, compared with these Divine realities,—realities which cannot fail to imprint their own greatness in the mind which burns beneath their influence? The very telling of them in the language of Scripture is unequalled. Pope affirms, for example, that the whole book of Job, with regard both to sublimity of thought and morality, exceeds, beyond all comparison, the most noble parts of Homer.

There is, however, one imposing form of things, which we must always distinguish from the greatness of the mind; I allude to the wealth, and offices, and honours, which are justly presumed, indeed, to be, at once, the means by which greatness effects its grand designs, and the just rewards of those high and useful labours; but which are sometimes found to stand in no actual connexion with it. And even distinguished talents misapplied, though belonging to the mind, may properly be ranked with these external things, because they are only means to an end, and, disjoined from their proper purpose, have no title to the name of "greatness," except in the obnoxious sense of its application to "the great dragon, that old serpent called the devil and satan." To all these signs of something nobler than signs, God refers when he says to David, "I have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth." All the honours which were conferred on Mordecai are said to be "the greatness whereunto the king advanced him;" for, the superior conscious greatness the king could not confer; and similar outward distinctions had been amply possessed by the mean and murderous Haman, who was justly hanged upon his own gallows.

True greatness is not a simple idea, or confinable to one subject, but is of several kinds, all of which are not of necessity combined in every instance; the kinds may be more or less in number as circumstances may determine.

1. In every instance, greatness is relative, invariably implies superiority, and can only be known by a reference to something which of its kind is comparatively small; or whose kind itself, compared with another kind, is evidently inferior. David, therefore, exclaims, "Thou hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee?" "For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above all gods." The "Great Spirit" is here contrasted with inferior spirits. And sometimes these "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise;" because, neglecting the genuine standard, all their notions of greatness are perverted by false comparisons. And yet the expression "great soul" sometimes glitters on the page of Heathen writers, and still more frequently, but not with more of truth and honesty, on that of modern infidels.

As to the contrast of opposite kinds and qualities of human character, nothing is more distinctly marked in almost every book and passage of the Holy Scriptures; and by those fair and forcible comparisons it is uniformly shown, that the lowest Christian, who bears the genuine stamp of his profession, is, in all the calmness of a rational and impartial estimation, a far greater man than the most illustrious slave of sin, who, perchance, may rule a senate, or an army, or an empire. How can it be otherwise, when his character is entirely moulded, and his way through life alone directed, by such principles and teaching as are literally matchless and Divine? His language is: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ." "Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." That is, true religion is incomparably superior in its nature and effects to all things else on earth; both the splendid externals of rank and wealth, and the much more boasted possessions of the natural, though cultivated, mind. This decision needs no formal proof. It is, even in this life, matter of universal observation and experience; and eternity will soon impress the infinite disparity with still greater depth and power on the conviction of every living spirit.

"The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, but the

way of the wicked seduceth them." Here, Solomon demonstrates the absolute superiority or greatness of the righteous from this,—that, in addition to the intrinsic worth and dignity of his mind, his plans and prospects are also vastly transcendent, and shall be, beyond all doubt, successful; "exceeding abundantly above all that he can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in him;" while those of the wicked shall end in certain shame and disappointment; showing that in this respect he was by no means a great man, but, on the contrary, was an absolute fool. And, to crown this surpassing prosperity of the righteous, God himself speaks of them in this manner: "The saints that are in the earth, the excellent, in whom is all my delight."

This greatness by comparison is most of all to be discovered in those things which respect the very essence and foundation of the Christian character. He who is "called great in the kingdom of heaven," we learn from Christ himself, is no other than the man whose righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, which is mentioned as the reason of his greatness; the "gift of righteousness," the "justification of life," which comes by faith in Christ, and which secures to the soul both exemption finally from death, and the highest kind of life,—spiritual, celestial, eternal life; while the sinner remains in the misery and death of separation both from God and from his kingdom. The righteousness of a loving, grateful heart, and of holy obedience to the Author of such life, must, of course, be included; for these two kinds of righteousness cannot possibly exist separate from each other. But neither of them could be found in the Scribes and Pharisees. Their righteousness was, therefore, merely nominal.

But a state of regeneration, and especially of full sanctification, is the proper health of the soul in all her powers and faculties, and prepares for the speedy acquisition of her utmost strength. Now, delivered from the depressing and constricting bondage of sin, she can expand and exercise herself with perfect freedom, and is much more likely soon to reach the full height of her being than when she lay in cowardly prostration beneath the withering and destructive dominion of her enemies. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Youthful lusts are said to "war against the soul." And St. Paul affirms that "to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." It is therefore evident, that, other

things being equal, the renewed man has, in regard to the freshness, and vigour, and developement of all his powers of mind, an inconceivable advantage above the unregenerate and unhappy slaves of vice. The difference, then, between him who is "great in the kingdom of heaven," and him who is merely righteous by profession, is as vast as that between truth and falsehood, between one mind possessed of its highest perfection, and another sinking swiftly to its lowest degradation; in a word, it is the unimaginable difference between heaven and hell.

2. There is another kind of greatness, which is derived—is reflected from an intimate association with what is truly great; and comes with such force and brightness, as to impart some portion of its own dignity to what is of itself inferior. Thus the high commission of the Baptist, as the precursor of the great Redeemer, was that which, in connexion with his own intrinsic holiness, made him "great in the sight of the Lord." That man is great "who shall do and teach one of these least commandments;" for even every "jot and tittle" of the law is great. What, then, shall be affirmed of the man who obeys and declares "the whole counsel of God?" We also read that "they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." The reason of all this is, that the agent becomes in some sense identified with his work, with its instruments and its effects; just as a vessel, under the direction of the pilot, is governed as if it were a part of his person, and animated by his mind; and just as this pilot may be supposed to share the merit of a successful voyage with the owner who employs him, and with the winds that waft him. In this relative respect the greatness of a minister is to be measured by the sublimity and importance of the doctrines which he preaches, and by the extent of his usefulness, as well as by his personal capacity and piety. He will have a peculiar share in the multiplied joys and glories of his converts. On the same principle, our reference to the will of God gives a certain dignity and grandeur to our actions. To lift a straw from the ground in obedience to Him, would be an act of genuine greatness; to save a sinking nation by unjust and cruel means, would be a work of real vileness. The widow's mite was munificence; the same sum expended in useless amusement is, in the sight of God, extravagance.

"But why should piety, as such, be considered in the light of greatness, when even in the religious world many genuine

Christians are known to be persons of feeble minds; and when the fame of greatness is commonly confined to a very small number of highly-gifted individuals?" We reply, that mental weakness is obviously distinct from moral; and that a man may be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might," whose intellectual parts and acquirements are but slender. Besides, the greatness of piety is frequently concealed from our view; and it is only in instances of publicity and prominence that it commands our admiration. But, whatever be the judgment of men concerning it, we have already seen what is the mind of God upon the subject. This might be sufficient to decide the question; but the reason of the thing is obvious. Religion is the most perfect image of Him, who, while he is justly styled "the great God," is the perfect model of all greatness. It is the best imitation of his wisdom, his power, his holiness, and especially of that transcendent display of Deity,—his goodness.

In this light, there is more of greatness, because there is more of God, in some pious cottager, bending beneath her poverty and years, entering the lowly porch of her much-loved place of worship; than in Cæsar, elated with his victories, passing through triumphal arches, and surrounded by the applauding myriads of imperial Rome. The one swells high, indeed, in the imagination of misjudging men; the other is truly "great in the sight of the Lord." Nor can he who has the finest natural genius, who is fraught with learning, and richly adorned with the fruits of an extraordinary cultivation, be seriously viewed as great, in opposition to the judgment of God; who considers him as positively vile, if wholly destitute of evangelical sanctification. And if he be a person corrupted by vice, and one who employs his talents for unholy purposes, his boasted greatness only makes him the baser and more despicable. Behold the noble poet, with the infidel world in homage at his feet! A living apis of magnificent appearance, caparisoned in cloth of gold, with stately front and gilded horns, enchanting his worshippers,—then goring them to death!

There is more of greatness, because there is more of God, in the soul of a lowly and despised follower of Jesus, than in the whole material universe with all its suns and systems. This is but the effect of Divine Omnipotence; that is not only the chosen palace of his rest and the object of his love, it is also the living image of himself; the image of his moral, his most estimable and

most illustrious, attributes: For these are neither his infinite knowledge, nor his infinite power, which appear to be simply instrumental to some higher end; but holiness, and truth, and justice, and the still more interesting and astonishing perfections of his grace and love. As beings, it is true, of a sensitive and infantile nature, we are deeply struck with the visible effects of Omnipotence; as reasonable and reflecting Christians, we most of all admire and adore his moral excellence; for in this consists the essence and chief glory of his greatness. And in imitating this, we imitate that greatness more truly and substantially than if we could put forth something of his creative energy, and fill the vacancies of heaven with new and matchless suns and stars.

True godliness is, therefore, in all instances, true greatness; and though frequently it lives unnoticed and uncelebrated by the world, it necessarily contains the elements and the essence of all the genuine grandeur of which the human mind is capable. The very Pagans used to give the title of "most good," before that of "most great," to the highest of their gods, because, they said, beneficence is more glorious than power.

3. Another kind of greatness lies in the possession and exertion of more than ordinary power of mind. Power, indeed, whether in the sublime of nature, of writing, or of character, is always an essential and commanding quality. That "powerful" is sometimes the meaning of the term "great," in the language of the Old Testament, is clear, from its application to threads well-twisted into cords, which gives the idea of united strength; and that "vehement, intense, ardent," is also its import when applied to mind, in the New Testament, might be shown from several texts. The same strength may be shown where the mind, through self-possession, abstains from vehemence. Thus, the man of God is great even when he seems to cease from action. He knows the proper season of affairs, and steadfastly observes it in his conduct. His silence has the force of eloquence. Amidst the horrors of shipwreck he has preserved the dignity of a mind unmoved.

"Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave."

He suffers wrong without resentment. He is unaffected by the contemptuous persecutions of the wicked; "when reviled, he revileth not again;" for then his only motion is that of a benign countenance, just altered by a smile, or somewhat saddened by a sen-

timent of pity at his heart. How mighty, how multiplied, were the provocations by which Moses was assaulted! But his greatness is not more conspicuous in the miracles which he wrought, than in the meekness with which he met those oppositions. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

To the same manifestation of extraordinary power belongs the forgiveness of injuries; than which we can scarcely imagine any thing more noble, as it argues a prodigious strength of mind, and a conquest over, not revenge alone, but a whole host of kindred passions that start up, or might arise, in opposition to it. A coward can sometimes fight and conquer, but never can forgive. A celebrated Roman moralist has said, "If thou hast any greatness of mind, thou never wilt believe thyself to have been used reproachfully." And Cæsar, hearing of the sudden death of his enemy, replied, "He has bereaved me of my greatest victory, for I had formed the resolution to pardon all the injuries he had ever done me." Hence also St. Ignatius writes, in his epistle to the Romans: "To be a true Christian is not a work of opinion or persuasion, but of greatness of mind; especially when he is hated by the world." It is because God is omnipotent and can restrain his righteous indignation, as well as because he is pitiful and kind, that he forbears to inflict due punishment upon the wicked. Rash anger is always the sign of a weak mind; and "it is the glory of a man to pass by an offence."

Having mentioned power, we must observe, that true greatness consists very much in all the Christian graces and duties carried out to an extraordinary degree, and exercised upon the grandest scale. The lowest kinds and fewest quantities, indeed, of spiritual goodness, are the effects and proofs of power; but power is most impressively conspicuous when the effects are extraordinary. A gentle stream never even suggests the idea of the power by which it moves; on the contrary, in contemplating the ocean, a sense of power is that which above every other sentiment predominates in the mind. We have said religion in its common instances is great, when compared with vice, with the whole immensity of matter, and even with mind itself, considered simply as intellectual; but, if we may use the expression, it sometimes rises far above itself. This admirable height and eminence is by divines called "heroic piety." A similar description of morality is termed, by the prince of Heathen philosophers, "the virtue

that is above us;" meaning that which lifts the spirit up, and renders man in some respects superior to man. And he who is truly great in this high sense will not, cannot be contented with moderate libations, but thirsts for all that God can give. He marches on in the "more excellent way." His measures are not taken from the petty specimens of Christians in general, but from the giants of every age, who have travelled in the greatness of their strength through hosts of impediments, and shown the character of saints in its loftiest dimensions; and, above all, from the power and the promises of God.

If there be any one kind of honourable ambition on earth, or in heaven above, more magnanimous than another, it is this of "rising into all the life of God." He who feels it is not simply of a gracious spirit, but established in grace. His love has no imaginable limits; it is "perfect love," and still it grows in him; it shows itself very high above the pitch of its usual sublimity, and constrains him to act and suffer with an extreme of devotedness, activity, and triumph, which demonstrate that more than mortal strength sustains and inspires him. His faith is not a timid reliance. It would build an ark of vast extent, amidst the scoffs and persecutions of the whole world; would determine him to choose "affliction with the people of God," in preference to the richest crown on earth; and to offer up his only son in sacrifice, at the command of God. It gives astonishing enlargement and strength to his mental vision. He seems to tread upon the earth as if there were no sky, and he beheld the glories and heard the triumphs of the third heavens; as if the covering were removed from hell and destruction, and he saw the horrors, and listened to the groans, of the damned; as if the mighty truths and mysteries of revelation were in some sort perceived, not in their verbal meaning, and clearly unfolded, but embodied in the living realities themselves, tangible, and as strongly and stirringly impressed upon the mind as external objects and real events in life exert their power upon the senses and the passions.

He "adds to his faith virtue," or manly courage, in prosecuting arduous duties with unflinching resolution, with unceasing perseverance, and amidst such difficulties and such dangers as would shake the soul of a common saint to its foundations. He dares to be wise amidst the laughter of a thousand fools. He says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection;" meaning, that he attacks the old man, his corrupted

nature, with strokes so firmly and so thickly planted, as entirely to subdue and conquer it. And if called from active duties to suffer sickness, abandonment, and poverty, his patience has its "perfect work," and soon rises to fortitude, his fortitude to triumph, and his triumph to "rejoicing in tribulation," even "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

There is great power in the wisdom and prudence by which the treasures of his knowledge are directed to the noblest ends. By this he penetrates the depths of those treasures, and discriminates between their several properties and uses with great strength of mind. To attribute power to prudence, in this sense, seems just as proper as to say, "a powerful genius;" "power of sight;" or "a telescope of great power." "Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness."

The accuracy of his discernment is greatly assisted by the relative extent and importance of things; impressing him with much force as he contrasts them in a wide survey. Strongly affected with what is truly great, small things, in his view, are diminished to their just proportions. Hence ordinary matters do not excite his passion, as in the case of very inferior minds. The eye that could embrace the hemisphere would not be much impressed either by the height of Snowdon, or the softer scenery of Richmond-Hill. And when things are not thus measured by comparison, a just and certain rule is always at hand, in regard to which they are instantly determined to be great or small,—the rule of their connexion with duty and with usefulness, of their fitness to promote the will of God. By this rule a great man carefully attends to trifles; by the same rule a sceptre might be a bauble in his estimation.

And when wisdom has determined what ought to be preferred, and is proper to be done, a great man seldom shows his strength of mind more fully than in that power of willing, that perfect moral freedom, which, by the grace of God, draws after it the prompt and manly resolution to perform, to the full extent, what is suggested by the judgment. There are degrees of moral freedom proportioned to the soul in holiness, and rising up to absolute infallibility in heaven. This freedom, even in this life, is sometimes found in such freshness and vigour, that, as we see in the Marquis de Renty and others, scarce a struggle remains to the mastery of the mind. "His seed remaineth in

him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Such perfect power of choice is not necessity, but total freedom from restraint,—a distinguished portion of the "glorious liberty of the sons of God;" and in him is an infinite excellence, as he is possessed of the most perfect and indefectible power to will only what is good, and in this moral sense cannot will that which is evil.

It may seem strange to name humility, not only as a sign of true greatness, but as participating of its very essence, and as one of its brightest glories: But the observation is most just. It is by no means a paradox to say, that greatness is lowliness. This is obviously the doctrine of our Lord: "And there was also a strife among themselves which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth." It was the doctrine of the Old Testament. With what sweetness does the royal Psalmist sing!—"Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child." It was, in some sense, the unintended doctrine of the Pagans. For, though they wholly omit the mention of humility, and were themselves a proud and self-conceited generation, they have described their man of magnanimity as one to whom nothing appears great; than which, there could scarcely have been given a better definition of him who is truly humble.

To him, on the contrary, who is of an opposite character, trifles are of high importance. His own will, his own opinion, and his own renowned name;—these, though repeatedly denied by him as things which he at all regards, are soon discovered by others, should he himself be deceived, as things which touch him still more deeply than the noble cause itself with which, perhaps, they are mixed up. Hence they soon inflame him. He to whom the epithet of "great" belongs of right, is high above them; hence he is calm and candid; for just and genuine

zeal, in any matter of importance, is in its nature gentle, because humble. The moment undue feeling flushes, the grand object is so far abandoned, and another cause—the all-important fame of the redoubtable hero himself—is adopted in its place. He who is truly great is more humble than any other man, in proportion to the superior power of mind by which, in the name of the God of Israel, he prostrates the Goliath of his own pride. He allows not this to master him; for this would be to stoop from greatness, while the proud man is beneath those things which feed his pride; they tyrannize over him, which is not greatness, but shameful meanness. He therefore acts at all times with a becoming dignity; with the dignity of a mind which is embued by the spirit of things that are dignified; and one of these is to be deeply humble; to feel things according to the degrees of their real importance. He resolves "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." His own faults have, in his enlightened conviction, a sad importance, and on this account he feels them very sensibly; his own glory is not only of no consequence, but would be robbing God of his due, and therefore he despises it.

Thus, it is evident that true greatness essentially excludes all pride, and all improper motives that might seem allied to pride. For if any one should say within himself, "I see that to be humble is the way to obtain a name; and for this reason I intend to be so;" he would attempt to realize an absolute contradiction,—to find the depths of the vale by ascending the mountain. The chief point, indeed, of humility consists in something more than a free acknowledgment and sense of our abjection; it consists in the love of it, and being actually delighted with it, not from meanness of spirit, or the want of courage and of nobleness of soul; but as, in truth, the consequence of generosity,—a purpose to extol so much the more the majesty of God, and so much the more to esteem and benefit his neighbour: And thus his lowliness is precisely that which so far constitutes his greatness.

It is partly from the same reach of thought in comparing great things with small, and from the same resistless power of mind in acting suitably to this comparison, that he of whom we speak is a man of great liberality. He knows his "purse is trash," and that many a fool and many a rogue is laden with

such trash; and on no consideration could his heaven-born spirit stoop to admire and love it. He knows, "if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." He reflects,—"What a contrast is here! What opposite claimants for the human heart! Perishable clay, and the eternal God who made it! And a reasonable being mentioned or imagined, who absolutely chooses and prefers the former! Rather say, an animal, insensible, irrational, and 'of the earth, earthy.'" But even trash is sometimes useful. Yes; and so is smoke in its embodied state; but what man truly great would love it, —love it apart from its usefulness, and love it more than God? love it merely for its own sake, secure it anxiously from the access of all mankind, and glow with joy at his heart because it was his own? Yet such is that irrational human being who loves money with the love which is "the root of all evil." Is this greatness? Yes; the greatest folly in the world; as eternity, and death before eternity commence, will loudly tell.

Longinus, no mean judge,—at least, of what was great in writing,—has observed, "The love of money is the disease which renders us most abject. I have, indeed, thought much upon it; but, after all, believe it impossible for the pursuers, or, to speak more truly, for the adorers and worshippers, of riches, to preserve their souls from the infection of those vices which are firmly allied to them. They can no longer endure the sight of any thing above their grovelling selves; and as for reputation, they regard it not. The faculties of the soul grow stupid, their spirit is lost, and good sense and genius lie in ruins, when the care and study of man is engaged about the mortal, the worthless, part of himself, and he has ceased to cultivate virtue, and polish his nobler part,—the soul. Can we expect to find in so contagious a depravity one generous and impartial soul above the sordid views of avarice, and clear of every selfish passion that may distinguish what is truly great?" And thus we see the reason of proverbially ascribing meanness—yes, a despicable and vulgar meanness, the very opposite of all greatness—to a niggardly and sordid disposition,—a heart fixed on what the Scriptures emphatically call "the things which all are to perish with the using." The Roman orator had a spirit much above this, though infinitely short of true Christian elevation, when, writing to his friend, he said, "Take care you do not engage your

library to any one; for I reserve all my little property that I may purchase this support for my old age. Do not despair of my being able to make your books my own; which if I do, I shall surpass Crassus in riches, and shall despise all their woods, and lands, and meadows."

But other principles of strength contribute to inspire a noble liberality;—a powerful sense of duty, powerful sympathy for the distressed, powerful zeal for projecting and advancing comprehensive plans of usefulness; a strong and constant tendency, indeed, of mind and heart towards munificence in charity, and towards the support of all proper, of all practicable, schemes, whatever be the magnitude of their attainable cost, for promoting the Divine glory. These principles all mutually strengthen and support each other. The qualities themselves, indeed, like all the other virtues, are in perfect harmony, and run into one another with the closest affinity; but the power which we have mentioned is an additional and common bond of union, which gives much more of compactness and intensity to the whole character than could possibly arise from the native tendency of the virtues in their lower and unimproved state.

It belongs to this subject, of strength of mind, to observe, that magnanimity is not a single grace, but the highest excellence, and flourishing complexion of all the excellences, of a great man. He seizes upon the very top and flower of every virtue, of every duty, and of every useful subject presented to his consideration. Nor is this holy and apostolical ambition accompanied by the least contempt for inferior attainments. These, he recollects, are "the degrees by which he hath ascended." But, while borne along on the current of his own native and irrepressible ardour, he looks with pleasure and applause on piety and improvement in all their gradations. He loves to cheer and animate the aspiring efforts of the youngest and the feeblest travellers, who seem to aim, with himself, at the home of perfection, and would gladly help them forward in their difficult career. But if they suffer themselves to be decoyed and dispirited by temptations to sensual ease, and linger with the multitudes that encourage one another in supineness, and in mean satisfaction with a dull and tardy progress, he dare not follow their example, but must "urge his way with strength renewed;" and presently they are left at an immeasurable distance from him.

Nor must his greatness be calculated merely by his actual improvement, whether of the mind, or in regard to the mighty things which he has already achieved; for, the powers of his body are much more limited than his desires, and often more so than his plans and efforts. And sometimes the field of his operations is narrow, when compared even with his real strength, by means of the restrictive situations and circumstances of his life. The boldness of his spirit, and the range of his principles, extend much beyond the limited material sphere in which he is placed. A Nelson and a Wellington would not have been known to possess the germ of their great skill and heroism, but for the extraordinary situations they were called to occupy. These gave a spring to their powers, and unfolded a capacity of which they themselves could not have been previously conscious.

4. The most exalted greatness attainable in this world is that which includes all the preceding kinds, with the addition of the intellect improved and strengthened in the highest possible degree. This addition is what chiefly obtains the name of "greatness" among men, because it shines forth in matters commonly more tangible, and more generally admired, than any other of the kinds, unless we shall except that of external appearances. It is not a number of abstract or obscure qualifications, but shines out in splendid actions, in great writings, great victories, or great plans or exertions, put forth to accomplish objects of great necessity, or of extraordinary usefulness. The greatness of learning and of genius always commands admiration; from good men, when they view it simply in itself; and from bad men, though it were directed to confound their vice and error.

But Christian magnanimity engrafts it on the stock of deep and solid personal religion; and it partakes of "the root and fatness of the olive-tree." Piety and parts are highly serviceable to each other. They reflect and re-act upon one another with great beauty and great efficacy. How much the progress and right application of intellectual improvement depend on the principles and graces of the Christian character, it is impossible to tell; nor is it necessary to be shown, with a view to produce conviction of its truth. Conscientiously industrious, and teachable, and determined, the Christian student, other things being equal, may be expected to succeed much beyond the soft and

sensual competitors for distinction in the career of mental cultivation. But this improvement is very much of a natural process,—instinctive or artificial,—and the effect of a humoursome or interested disposition, while the aids of religion are wholly rejected. In this respect, a wicked man may cultivate his mental faculties, just as, by exercise and diet, he gives vigour to his limbs. And so far, indeed, both a good and a bad man are precisely on a level. The latter may, by skill and perseverance, acquire no inconsiderable strength of mind. The former will experience, that religion does not, of necessity and by miracle, confer either genius or learning, and that, if he would acquire true greatness, he must address himself to the ordinary means for accomplishing his end, just like any other man. The understanding, the memory, the imagination, and the taste which gives force and beauty to discourse and elocution, may all be jointly and severally cultivated by such arts and exercises as are common to the species, and not confined to any class of mankind, good or bad. But how religion elevates their character, and adds to their dimensions, will partly be seen from what remains of this discourse.

II. We come to show, in the second place, that true greatness is derived from God.

So far as piety is concerned in this inquiry, the proposition is indisputable. It is equal to affirming, that religion is from God, which we need not here attempt to prove, because to Christians it is self-evident, whether by "religion" we understand the system of truth as revealed in the Bible, or the same system in its saving operations on the heart. That religion, in both these respects, is eminently calculated to enlarge and nourish the intellectual powers, has been questioned, and, strange to say, by some who have professed Christianity. If, however, in addition to what has been already said respecting the inseparable connexion between piety and greatness, we offer two or three brief considerations, the truth of this opinion may still more fully appear. At least, it will appear, that true greatness comes from God, not, indeed, exclusively by means of religion, but also in various other ways.

1. He gives the original capacity for intellectual greatness, a gift which, it is obvious to remark, is not conferred on men in general. The more important privileges of conversion, and of consequent salvation, are placed by grace within the reach of all

who hear the Gospel; and so far, as we have already said, they may be "great in the sight of the Lord." But the power to become intellectually great, even under the most favourable circumstances, appears to be confined to comparatively few. To succeed in poetry, it is currently observed, a man must be born a poet. May not this also be affirmed of the philosopher? Even courage, the extraordinary courage requisite to form the hero, is not always purely the effect of moral principle, but is often native to the heart, and originally mixed up in high proportions, with the very nature and structure of the subject, and is, in the strictest sense, a gift from God. Whatever may be thought of the opinion, that all souls are, at first, of equal capacity, and only differ subsequently from circumstances relating to their education, one thing is clear, that they are not all upon a level as to the fitness and perfection of the material vehicles and sensitive machinery allotted to them in this life; and with an inferior or defective harp, the most accomplished musician may be unable to perform in a manner equal to one of lower talents, who commands a better instrument. That much, as to the strength and success of some mental operations, depends on health of body, (though in others it would seem the soul acts as if entirely independent of it,) is undeniably the fact; which confirms the doctrine, that original capacity depends, at least, in some degree, upon the body, and is so far the gift of God. And if the difference of minds be judged as wholly owing to their original creation, without regard to the body, it will be still more evident, that eminent capacity is a Divine communication.

2. God also presents, in the Christian system, truths, and means, and motives directly and incomparably calculated to enlarge the mind. Truth of any sort may be made, by prudent application, the nutriment of the soul. Grand truths, embodied in material vastness and magnificence, like those of astronomy and natural history, expand the ordinary mind, and prepare it for more abstract and more important contemplations. But the attributes of God;—his providence, its variety, its unity, its utility, its glory, extending through all time, and embracing universal nature, from its minutest parts, up to those of almost inconceivable magnitude,—the mysteries of redemption, in which the moral perfections of God are most illustriously displayed,—the marvellous nature and properties, the history and destinies, of man;—all these sublime subjects are more truly and more

fully exhibited in the Holy Scriptures than in all other writings whether philosophical or imaginative; and are equally superior in giving purity and firmness to the intellect. "I have written to him the great things of my law." But for the Holy Scriptures even Milton could not have possessed either the subject, or the strength of mind to write his "Paradise Lost."

Christianity imparts a quality, a range, and an energy to all the virtues which nothing else could give. Justice and integrity benevolence and charity, as required by the Gospel, and infused into the soul of every genuine Christian by the Holy Ghost, are entirely of another character, when compared with all the natural forms and principles of morality to which these names are given; and such unequalled excellences cannot fail, even in the ordinary instances of their operation on the mind, to strengthen all the faculties.

The Christian is also taught seriously and constantly to keep in view the noblest and most animating aims and purposes that can possibly engage the attention and stimulate the exertion of the human being. To promote the general good of mankind,—the good of their personal and relative enjoyments in this life, and their eternal happiness in heaven,—as fulfilling one of the sublimest moral laws of the universal system, that of the intimate connexion and mutual dependence of all the parts for the good of the whole; a law which strikes a fatal blow at the root of all selfishness, and gives a character of real grandeur to benevolence. To him whose mind sweeps the extent of this vast law, and whose heart is charmed with its beauty and its divinity, his own personal emolument, and gratification, and celebrity have a character of real pettiness and insignificance; and he would be utterly ashamed to suffer them to trench upon a principle so God-like and so glorious.

But incomparably higher—for it is God's own last end in the creation of the system—is the grand governing design and aim of the Christian, to do the will of God rather than to please the whole universe besides; and to promote his glory as an end infinitely preferable to that of the good of the created system. But when both these noble objects are found to coalesce, to be inseparable, to exalt each other, and to be advanced by the self-same line of human conduct, their joint impression on the man who steadfastly pursues them, must be most elevating to the mind. And if this doctrine seem to be contradicted by the comparative

mental imbecility of many professing Christians, let us rather suspect that the failure lies with them, as living far beneath the glorious height to which the Gospel invites them, than implicate religion as having no peculiar tendency to encourage and assist us in the cultivation of our intellect.

3. God also gives the providential means and situations for eliciting and perfecting original capacity. How many of the mighty, both in church and state, have been originally drawn from obscurity and ignorance by small events, which appeared to have the character of mere accidents; but which, when viewed as a series, and as uniformly bearing on one chief object, have proved that the eye of God looked forward to important results not at all imagined by the parties themselves! "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the Judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another." It is in this sense of special designation that we say, "True greatness comes from God;" for, in an absolute and general sense, all degrees of capacity, all the modes and measures of actual existence, have the same creative origin.

The events to which we have referred are minor parts of that special providence by which he sometimes executes his purposes, neither by the natural and undirected current of affairs on the one hand, nor by miraculous interruptions of that current on the other, but by that gentle sway of things which sets them not aside, but bends them to his purpose. Thus, in answer to prayer, rain may be given, and pestilence removed, and the sword itself stayed, and even the covetous inclined to educate some poor scholar, by Him who has both mind and matter equally beneath his irresistible and suasive control; and all this without violating the laws of physics in the one case, or those of moral freedom in the other. Hence, David says, "Thy gentleness hath made me great;" meaning to acknowledge, that the providence of God towards him had revived his sinking spirits, given him moral power and confidence, and raised him to the lofty situation which he held as king of Israel.

4. Lastly: God inspires greatness. St. Paul affirms, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The matchless wisdom of Daniel was believed to come from "the spirit of the holy gods," which was said to be in him. And the most celebrated philosophers of ancient times declare, "that there never was a great man who was not made such by the help and

inspiration of the Almighty." True greatness is not to be acquired merely by the means appointed,—either by rules of art, or by a happy train of external circumstances. Good men are "taught of God;" sustained in their patience, and strengthened in their active powers and zeal, by the influx of an extraordinary power; and beckoned to their duty by the secret intimations of the Holy Ghost. And bad men are, no doubt, also, in some instances, affected by the same directive Agent, though not as an indwelling Spirit of grace and love, and smiling on the parties. If in this manner he restrains "the wrath of man," and many other overflowings of ungodliness, we may also presume, that often, by his own immediate touches and suggestions, he may carry on the minds of men to the accomplishment of his own providential plans. And divines and scholars of the highest fame for learning and sobriety of judgment, are free to utter their belief, that great discoveries in science, and useful measures, both in public and in ordinary life, have been sometimes derived, though in a course of diligent investigation on the part of the inventors, from the same Divine source. When St. Cyprian quotes this text,—"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," he writes "magnanimity" for "long-suffering and gentleness;" a term probably intended by him to include both these graces, and which Marshall, his translator, expounds as signifying "true elevation and greatness of soul." At all events, in this comprehensive roll of virtues we behold the essential elements of genuine greatness, and all directly emanating from the operation of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believer. This celebrated father and martyr, citing 1 Cor. xiii. 5, on charity, (where again we have a beautiful analysis of true Christian greatness in the properties of that one grace,) renders the clause, "charity suffereth long," by, "charity is generally brave-spirited;" showing, that love, which is a fruit of the Spirit, is one medium by which the Holy Ghost creates true greatness, which greatness is eminently manifest in long-continued patience under sufferings.

It may be proper now to observe, respecting the several means just named, as employed by God to raise up men of eminence, that all of them are usually seen to meet in each individual whom God has called to greatness.

There is a beautiful proportion manifest between the end and the means, in his administrations. He could perform great

things through the medium of the weakest intellect; and confound the highest possible exertions of the great. But this is not his ordinary method of proceeding. If he have some mighty work to achieve, he raises up an instrument, or a variety of instruments, whom he prepares and qualifies chiefly, though not exclusively, for the labours allotted to them.

Did the conversion of the Gentiles, at the opening of the Christian dispensation, require, from the fearful difficulty of the work, one man, at least, whose greatness should qualify him to lead the van of the apostolic forces? God had already such an hero in his training. Saul of Tarsus was endowed with the improvable capacity, the powerful intellect, the natural aspirings, the moral courage, the clear understanding, and the unconquerable firmness, proper for the lofty position he was called to occupy. Full scope was allowed for his instruction in all the necessary parts both of Jewish and Grecian learning. His conversion was effected by extraordinary means, to subdue his mind at once to the conviction that the Gospel was true, and to make a deep and indelible impression on his heart of its incalculable worth and efficacy. The mysteries of redemption burst upon him with unclouded brightness. He drank largely at the fountain of Divine and holy influences, which, as medicines of more than earthly power, healed and refreshed, and strengthened all his faculties, adding virtues and dimensions to them far beyond what they could ever have possessed in his unchristian state. Thus qualified, "the trumpet gave a certain sound, and he prepared himself for the battle."

From all this we perceive that heavenly endowments are far more efficacious for special purposes of usefulness, when they fall upon a suitable capacity, than is to be expected in the case of their connexion with inferior abilities. This is clear from the ministerial fitness of Moses "the servant of God;" the royal accomplishments of David; the sublime style of Isaiah; and the reasoning and energy of the epistles by St. Paul.

In some such way as this the footsteps of God himself are to be traced and adored, through the lengthened and laborious journey by which he conducts some highly-favoured ones to greatness.

III. In speaking of the means by which true greatness is acquired, we must, of course, decline, at present, to point out the method of attaining to a religious state and character. For

though this be in itself an inquiry of the first importance, still it is not strictly the subject now in hand.

It is presumed, that all who aspire to greatness in its highest sense and measure, are already in possession of its principle and essence as contained in "righteousness and in true holiness,"—the image of the "great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," who is, we repeat, the only perfect and prescribed Exemplar of all greatness: And to offer some imperfect counsels how, in addition to this holiness, the mind may be enlarged in its capacity, and strengthened for the more effectual performance of universal duty, is the object we have now in view. The subject is as copious as it is important; but want of room will impose the utmost brevity on all our observations.

Some things, however, are at once both means and end. There are parts and principles of greatness especially promotive of their own conservation, and of the farther improvement of the whole. For example: One of these is determined resolution. But this germinates by its operation; and while it rises into stronger strength, it nobly carries forward all the rest. If, therefore, we are guilty of some slight repetitions, the reason will be obvious.

1. We, then, observe, that in the front of this honourable academy it is written, in the boldest characters, "Let none enter here who is not possessed of courage." This is emphatically, but not exclusively, addressed to young persons; and it is to these we now presume to offer counsel. Youth is not only the season for sowing, with much prospect of success, the seeds of a glorious harvest which perchance may almost overtake the spring; but it is also the period of great constitutional ardour. An impetuous disposition, well and early directed, is, by God's blessing, of immense advantage in the acquisition of true greatness, and that in all its kinds.

Come on, then, ye noble race of youth, whose body trembles with warm sensibility, and whose spirit, like the eaglet, strongly flutters, and already seeks the sky! Come on, I say, and let us seek the beauty of the mind! the pleasures which have their secure and ever-flowing fountain there; the "true riches" of an exalted piety; and the power to fill up our day and generation to the utmost possible extent of usefulness. Like young Paley, be ashamed of past delays; and, like him, lay your plans of future studies systematically, deliberately, resolvedly; and, like him again, determine that your works shall not be elegant and

idle speculations, but all solid, and directly tending to promote the best and noblest interests of mankind.

2. Avoid all that is preventive or destructive of true greatness. Sin of every kind is hostile to it. Sin of every kind is itself imbecility and meanness. But certain sins are peculiarly calculated to weaken and contract the soul. We have already named the love of money as, perhaps, the chief sin of this class. Some of the temptations incident to youth are also ruinous in this respect. Indulgence of the sensual passions greatly tends to debase the heart and intellect. On this point the confession of the victims, if we had no higher, would be competent authority. A man too much celebrated in the northern part of this island, who sometimes forbears to desecrate his harp, and strikes the strings of contrition with a warning voice, alludes to the evil of such indulgence, both as to its guilt and punishment, and adds,—

> "But och! It hardens a' within,
> And petrifies the feelin."

An uniform dislike of labour, and desire of relaxation, of softness, of comfort, and pleasures of all kinds, when taken to excess, not unfrequently bring on a cureless weakness or paralysis of all the moral, and sometimes also of the mental powers.

3. Be as much conversant as possible with true greatness itself, in all its forms; and with every thing allied to it, or that may tend to print its image on your mind, and infuse its noble spirit through all the powers and faculties of your soul. Prefer the company of great men to that of dwarfs, whether in religion or in intellect. You will find such noble company, at least in the Christian sense, in cellars, and in cottages; Armelles and Hermans who might put to shame—so far as virtue argues greatness—the hoary loiterers and the downy doctors of this bookish and professing age. Where company cannot be had, the fields of truth, revealed and profane, are open to receive you; and from these you may wisely choose, not the weeds that glitter in the eye of childhood, but the fruitful districts, the coverts of the forest, and the prospects of the plain.

In company, indeed, we take the measure and imbibe the spirit of the present example. But abstract truth imparts a similar effect; and through the medium of the imagination and the force of language, and, more than all, the inward power and teaching of the Holy Ghost, great examples, personally absent

from us, may burn upon the mind with something like their real presence. And as to imitation, imitate their principles, the essentials and excellences of their character, their zeal, wisdom, genius, industry, and piety, rather than the individual manners of their life. The acts proper for them may not be suitable to our peculiar class of mind, and our different states of life; but the principle from which they flow may be transferred to us, perhaps, with great advantage.

4. Adopt such rules for strengthening the mind, as reason and experience have shown to be serviceable. Those writings on the intellectual powers which take experience for their basis are in this respect inestimable; and, notwithstanding the senseless outcry against all metaphysics, such writings have embodied many valuable observations, which if some of those who have joined in the opposition have applied to the strengthening of their own mental powers, the scandal they have thrown upon a noble science would have so far been prevented. Because we have theoretical and fanciful metaphysics, is there nothing solid in such studies? nothing truly identified with reason, with just observation, with consciousness, with common sense?

The memory, for example, may be strengthened by exercise, subjected to regulation, as well as the ear improved in sounds, and the eye in its tact for appreciating colours. The imagination is particularly susceptible of rule, and of increasing brightness and expansion. Many good counsels are given for the acquisition of a sharp and sound judgment; such as that of close, cautious, independent thinking, untrammelled by the prejudices and opinions of other men, and yet candid to appreciate them, and careful to distil advantage from them. But all such rules, of course, cannot find illustration, or even a name, in this brief pamphlet.

So attentive, indeed, were the ancients to mental cultivation, that, with this special view, they studied its capability of being improved or impaired by health or sickness, and observed, not certain quantities alone, but also certain qualities, of diet, in order to assist the mind. Some of their physicians, for example, ordered honey as a proper food for children, from a notion, that it had a happy influence on the brain, and gave it more of fitness as the instrument of the mind. This the Greeks themselves prescribed, as tending, more than any other food, to give wisdom to their children. To this, not improbably, Isaiah has some reference,

where he prophesies of Christ, "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good." And mint was called *mentha*, from the word signifying "mind," because that herb was deemed good for strengthening the brain and memory, and for giving a peculiar flow and liveliness to the thoughts. Temperance must be favourable to intellectual growth and exercises, and fasting or abstinence, in particular, is highly recommended as sharpening the mind, not by eminent divines of the Romish church alone, but also by many learned and spiritual men in Protestant communions.

5. Be diligent. Remember, that two worlds are the reward of attention to the counsel contained in these two words: "The life which now is, and that which is to come." The idle and the ignorant, instead of enjoying their existence to its full extent, scarcely live at all. With respect to real pleasure, and the proper satisfactions of pious and of intellectual consciousness, they seem to be almost on the confines of annihilation. In this state the mental powers do not expand, but shrink. It is a fact established beyond all contradiction, that natural genius, the most powerful, must wither and become either useless or pernicious, if unwatered and unpruned by regular application. When the Roman historians would describe an extraordinary person, they usually observe, "He was a man of incredible industry, remarkably laborious." Providence exacts uncommon diligence, as the price of genuine greatness, and it must be paid, as well by the prince as by the peasant.

> "Ten thousand labours must concur to raise
> Exalted excellence."

6. Exercise your mind, as far as consistent with your character and situation, on every branch of useful knowledge. The greatest minds are usually those possessed of the most extensive knowledge; and, strange to say, they who know the most are often most distinguished for originality, as if they seemed scarcely indebted to their knowledge. It is the natural effect of such variety of studies,—the more so when attended with some difficulty,—to call forth, and by this means to mature, the mental energies.

The study of several languages, and of all the sciences, is strongly approved by unquestionable judges, not merely on account of the knowledge they convey, but because they give the

mind expansion and polish, and an additional power of native thinking. It is on this account that they have been recommended, in all ages, as the fountains of eloquence. For, each has a mode of expression, some beauty, some flavour of its own, so to speak; and, embued by the whole, the learner is always enabled to form a composition for himself, the result, indeed, of their mingled influences, but, in the proper sense, original;—a language peculiar to himself, the dialect of his own taste and judgment;—and that indicates the growing manliness of the mind by whose power it was elicited. We have the authority of Locke to say, that "the taking a taste of every sort of knowledge is necessary to form the mind, and is the only way to give the understanding its due improvement to the full extent of its capacity." The imaginative arts—poetry, for instance—may be profitably added to more important subjects; not as ornaments and relaxations merely, but as having, when judiciously employed, a healing influence on the heart, and exalting to the faculties. The Bible abounds with the noblest poetry in the world; and for this reason, as well as for still more important ones, it is highly calculated to nourish all the powers of the mind.

All these studies, animated by true Christian principles, and directed to some valuable end, must supply the mind with a perpetual succession of the most delightful, healthy, bracing exercises that can well be imagined. The term "liberal" is said to be given to certain sciences and arts, and to education, because they are worthy of liberal men, and liberate the mind from prejudice and vice, teach us to think for ourselves, and to be in implicit servitude to none but God, which is perfect freedom.

7. Be men of ardent and unceasing prayer. If God be the source of greatness, then those who aspire to greatness must live at the Fountain-Head: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Habits of devotion often prove the best method of illumination; and, without designing to disparage the instituted means of instruction, we may affirm, that the love of God is the best light of the soul.

Devotion, all must allow, has the happiest influence on the heart; and it is chiefly the heart, and not the mind, that deliberates on our actions; and the decision which we make is not taken so much from the light of the understanding as from

the motions of the will. Men judge of things as their affections, good or bad, incline them; and, therefore, the understanding itself—that royal faculty—may be still more exalted or debased by the suasive power of the disposition. It is, then, of great importance, in regard to intellectual correctness and improvement, that the youthful scholar should assiduously cultivate the spirit of devotion. Young Solomon received his matchless wisdom in answer to prayer. The wisdom of Daniel was also extraordinary; but let it never be forgotten, that Daniel was a man of extraordinary prayer. If truth be the nutriment of the mind, and active duty its invigorating exercise, devotion is the salubrious atmosphere so indispensably necessary to its proper life and healthful respiration.

Let the aspiring student, therefore, be exhorted to pray "always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and to watch thereunto with all perseverance," resolvedly endeavouring to carry into full effect the several hints of advice which we have here presumed to offer; and oft-times praying, with direct and special reference to his various studies, in these words of Aquinas, or others better suited to his views and pursuits:—"O incomprehensible Creator, the true Fountain of light, and only Author of all knowledge; who out of the treasure of thy wisdom hast, with wonderful harmony, disposed and ordered all the parts of the world; vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to enlighten my understanding with the rays of thy brightness, and chase away from me all darkness of sin and ignorance! Thou who makest eloquent the tongues of those that want utterance, instruct my tongue, and pour on my lips the grace of thy blessing; give me a diligent and obedient spirit, quickness of apprehension, capacity of retaining, and the continual assistance of thy Holy Spirit; that I may apply all to thy honour, and the everlasting salvation of my own soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

IV. We purposed, lastly, to show how instructive and inspiring are certain examples of true greatness which have shone forth in the church.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," is a maxim which applies as well to systems as to characters. And by this rule, so plain and obvious, we need not hesitate to pronounce, that the religion of the Bible is better calculated to produce men truly great, than all human systems put together. This is clearly

admissible, whether by "greatness" we mean simply "goodness,"—the best resemblance, we repeat, of the "great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,"—or the same goodness as seen in its extraordinary developement and application of the intellectual powers. If sincere and honest purposes, high and honourable principles; if wisdom, which pursues the best ends by the best means; if power of the mental faculties and vastness of conception; and if usefulness, in all its kinds, and carried out to an unexampled extent, be the elements of greatness, we might challenge the whole world of infidelity, and, could we invoke them from their graves, the boasted heroes and sages of Pagan antiquity, to contradict us when we say, that "this religion has produced the greatest men, and in the greatest numbers, that the world ever saw."

In regard to true moral courage, at once a grand cause and effect of greatness, the mightiest of those "giants in the earth" have entirely failed. Alexander himself, when returned from conquest, and stricken with the fear of death, meanly filled his palace with innumerable sorcerers and magicians, to save him from so dreaded a catastrophe. On the other hand, Cassius, Brutus, nay, the mighty Cato,—marvellous lovers of their country, if you believe them and their friends,—all stooped, even from the proud and furious greatness which they really possessed, and died, despairing, by their own hands; the latter with the noble sentiment, that as the state of society was so dangerous, it behoved Cato to seek a place of safety for himself; and then, deaf to the cries and entreaties of his family, and having struck an affectionate and weeping domestic on the face, with much impatience for the event, outstrips his sword, tears his own bowels, and rushes into the presence of his Judge, like a fury. Such conduct either was, or was not, consistent with the general principles professed by the men; and in either case the meanness and folly are most manifest. How different the principles and conduct of the Christian martyr!

In regard to pains of body, it might seem as if a great man had the power to turn them into pleasures. Of this we have an instance in St. Ignatius, on the eve of martyrdom, so truly sublime, that, while it loudly reproaches our infantile complainings, extorts our admiration and amazement. The whole passage deserves our most frequent and serious perusal. In his epistle to the Romans, he writes, "From Syria even

unto Rome, I fight with beasts both by sea and land, both night and day; being bound to ten leopards, that is to say, to such a band of soldiers, who, though treated with all manner of kindness, are but the worse for it. But I am the more instructed by their injuries. May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me, which also I wish may exercise all their fierceness upon me, and which for that end I will encourage, that they may be sure to devour me, and not serve me as they have done some, whom out of fear they have not touched. But if they will not do it willingly, I will provoke them to it. Pardon me; I know what is profitable for me. Now I begin to be a disciple. Nor shall any thing move me, whether visible or invisible, that I may attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross; let the companies of wild beasts; let breakings of bones and tearing of members; let the shattering in pieces of the whole body, and all the torments of the devil come upon me, only let me enjoy Jesus Christ."

"The noble army of martyrs," the apostles and first Christians, the fathers, the missionaries, the reformers, the men of God-like sanctity and charity, of learning, of genius, of science, and of distinguished private virtue, which Christianity enrols among her worthies,—all demonstrate, that religion, and nothing but religion, gives true greatness. And in more modern days we have seen this honourable train continued in Boyle and Barrow, Watts and Doddridge, Wesley and Whitefield, Howard and Reynolds, and an interminable list of others; all of them exhibiting some striking form of greatness, and constituting such a galaxy of excellence as we believe could not have possibly been matched, under any circumstances whatsoever, but for the Christian religion.

In the characters and lives of those successive bands of heroes might be seen the most shining proofs and illustrations of the nature and importance of true greatness, of its high descent, and of the means by which it may be most fully and most certainly obtained. And to behold them in their march, and in their "deeds of noble daring," as seen in the simple and authentic records of their fame, is truly a privilege, of which the pleasure and the profit seem alternately to exceed each other.

But at present we confine our observations to an individual name, just added to the list of champions whose retreat from

the field has been sounded and obeyed ;—the name of "ADAM CLARKE ;" a name, of which the native honours can only be reflected—not augmented—by any number of subjoined initials, expressive of his well-won academic reputation.

The history of a person of such eminence, though merely sketched, would hardly comport either with the brevity or spirit of a sermon ; and its principal and leading facts have been already given to the public, in the several prints which have adverted to his life and death.

And the history, at least of the first chief portion of his life, from his own pen, together with a suitable continuation, may be expected soon to meet the public eye ; for, in January, 1821, he observes in a private communication, "I am writing my Life ; and a curious matter it will be. I began this work because I was informed, that another, for the sake of the gain, had got it quite ready for the public as soon as I should be ready for my coffin. I think I can tell my own story best myself." Till this work shall appear, it would be a task of some uncertainty to attempt a copious detail and final judgment of his public actions. Till then we must be satisfied with the various unarranged incidents and observations which his friends may occasionally offer to the public.

In regard to his character, we have endeavoured to describe it generally, in the foregoing pages, being perfectly convinced that the principles and proofs of genuine greatness, there advanced, were substantially embodied in the piety and ministry, and in the writings and chief actions, of that eminent and faithful servant of God. But some farther statements and remarks may be requisite to show more clearly the link of connexion between our subject of greatness, and the man of God whose sudden and lamented death we are now called to improve.

He was born in 1763, at a village called Magherafelt, between Port-Stewart and Coleraine, in Ireland. His father, who taught a school in the parish church, and kept a small farm, was a man of strong sense, and of a tolerable share of learning, for a person in his rustic circumstances ; somewhat enthusiastic in his attachment to the classics, as he used to cultivate his fields according to the rules laid down in Virgil's Georgics. His mother was respectably descended from the M'Leans of Mull, in Scotland ; was a Presbyterian by education ; possessed of considerable piety ; and appears to have taken great pains to train up her

children in the fear of the Lord. From such instructers, it is not surprising that he should soon acquire a love of letters, and of serious meditation. When a youth, such was his thirst for knowledge that he would sometimes walk over hill and dale, for ten or fifteen miles, to beg the loan of some scarce and curious book. In these few circumstances we already trace the obscure spring of no ordinary stream of usefulness, which pursued its lengthened and majestic course with great swiftness, and cheered many a district with its fertilizing waters.

Adam in his boyhood sometimes associated with the sons of Counsellor O'Neil, the lord of the manor; and though they took a widely different course from his in subsequent life, one of them was, by the providence of God, the means of first leading him among the Methodists. He observes, "Mark O'Neil said to me one day, when I was very young, 'Addy, there is to be a Methodist preacher at Burnside to-night; let us go and hear him, and have a little sport.' I thought it was a strange thing to have sport under preaching; however, like a careless boy, I thought if there were any to be had, I should like to have a share in it. We both went; the preaching was in a barn. A tall man, lank-sided, with long sleek hair, looked seriously at us who were young, and said, 'If any of you boys behave improperly, you shall be turned out.' I thought, There is to be but little sport here if this is to be the case; and I heard in fear. The person who addressed us was John, the brother of Jeremiah Brettel, one of the English preachers, and whose family resided in Birmingham. Several persons had accompanied him from Coleraine; and it was the first time the Methodists had visited Burnside. They came after this; and first preached in one house, then in another, scattering themselves over several miles of country. When the service was over I followed the preacher, with others, to the door of a person whose house adjoined the place. On gaining the door he turned round, stood, and solemnly exhorted us to give ourselves to God. Till then the Methodists, as a people, were unknown to me."

Such was his first entrance into the outer court of Methodism. Soon after this he became truly penitent before God, and united himself to the body. Mr. Thomas Barber was the preacher who was rendered then exceedingly useful to him, and was one means of his joining the society. Mr. Barber had himself been brought to God by the ministry of Mr. Wesley, in Sidare, in the county

of Fermanagh ; and was then, at his own expense, acting as a missionary through an extensive tract of country, near the sea-coast, in the county of Antrim, which embraced part of the Londonderry circuit. Under this affectionate foster-father, Adam Clarke and Andrew Coleman, both of whom often took sweet counsel together, were, in a great measure, trained.

About this time he received "the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins," in a field, while following his agricultural pursuits. He was in deep anguish of spirit on account of his sins ; and, like his Redeemer who suffered for those sins, "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly," and took the kingdom of heaven by violence. "The ground where I knelt," he observed, "was literally like ploughed ground." But peace ensued. His soul was filled with joy and gladness, and his lips with praise. In one of his late visits to that country, while gazing with deep interest on this spot, which to him was "holy ground," he formed the design of purchasing the field, and of erecting a house upon it, that, amidst those interesting scenes of his youth, he might spend at least a part of the evening of his life.

After his conversion he felt the word of God to burn like fire in his bones ; and soon began to exhort the people in the neighbourhood. John Bredin, an eccentric man, but a preacher of considerable talent, was the person who absolutely compelled him to take a text, and but for whom he would not have begun to preach so soon, or to attempt the explanation of some scripture in the usual way.

He was recommended as a youth of much promise to the notice of Mr. Wesley, who soon provided him a scholarship at Kingswood ; and who, in 1782, when he was only in his nineteenth year, called him out to the work of an itinerant preacher, by appointing him to the Bradford Circuit, Wiltshire. Thus commenced the useful and honourable career of his public labours, which he continued to pursue with unabating zeal and vigour for nearly half a century, when, as we are all but too well-informed, he was suddenly removed from life by the existing pestilence. During the whole of that long period he continued preaching Jesus and the resurrection, with extraordinary success and reputation, to countless thousands of hearers in the metropolis, and in many of the chief towns and villages in England, Ireland, Scotland, and the Norman and Shetland Isles.

It is somewhat singular, that, in his early days, three young

men, destined to arrive at considerable fame, but in very different departments of study, should have met for the first and last time at the house of a friend in Bristol, where they spent the evening:—Humphry Davy, Robert Southey, and Adam Clarke; not one of them probably, just then, anticipating the distinction which they afterwards severally obtained. Such, however, was the providence of God concerning them, that the extraordinary diligence and talents of each were rewarded with an eminent degree of success.

Possessed by nature of a strong and active mind, a mind of the widest range in quest of knowledge, but patient in the use of means, however difficult, to gain his end; nurtured in the school of early and severe study, and subsequently practised in the best application of his parts and resources, under circumstances numerous and varied, he ultimately gained a height of mental greatness to which very few students, we believe, have attained. The wealth of his mind, like real property, seemed to increase with good management, in a compound ratio, that placed him far above the common ranks, and enabled him to exercise the liberal disposition so native to his heart, in largely augmenting the scantier intellectual stores of others.

His original capacity was vigorous and substantial, but far from fine and flexible. He mistook himself in saying, as he sometimes did, that he laboured on a barren soil. The soil was good, but encumbered, and difficult of culture. His understanding possessed great force, was clear and sound, and fitted to investigate, and, what is of the first importance in the operations of the mind, to arrange and generalize the subjects of his thoughts. But in the fervour of these operations, and in his great impatience to pass on to other objects, he sometimes failed in that exactness of method, in that perfect exercise of judgment, and in that nice balancing of things, of which, notwithstanding, he was perfectly capable.

His imagination was vivid and excursive; but was not considered by himself as deserving any special cultivation and direction. His powers of invention were fruitful in the extreme; and the tact and compass of his wit, beyond those of most men; but through a studied, rather than a natural, dislike of what was fine and cautiously finished, he was by no means careful to prune and dress the produce of his exuberant mind. He was, perhaps, less remarkable for taste than for any other of his numerous

endowments. At all events, it was rather distinguished by correctness than polish. It was the judgment of thought and of common sense, more than of a nice and delicate sensibility, applied to pleasurable subjects, such as those of grace and beauty. But even here he might probably have excelled, and might have attained a style of writing truly beautiful and eloquent, without at all impairing its perspicuity and force, but for that high philosophical, or rather theological, contempt with which he usually spoke of such ornaments.

He had by nature a lively and vivacious perception of most subjects; but this he turned to advantage, in connexion with the influence of system in study, by making it a principle of memory and of reminiscence, rather than the means of helping him to contrasts and descriptions; and, accordingly, his recollection was prodigiously powerful, even to the close of his long and laborious life. In his youth he was a lover of music, and took much interest in assisting the Rev. Mr. Graham, the clergyman of the parish, who had a particular affection for him, to improve the psalmody of his church; and in private he practised instrumental music. His subsequent undervaluation of the art was rather philosophical and religious, than congenial and natural. The same might be said of his prejudice against the fine arts in general. As to poetry, his objection arose chiefly from the conviction, that few things were more liable to abuse. Yet he has playfully attempted some exercises in this line of composition; and in one instance produced a dialogue, which, an eminent judge and poet was of opinion, showed great powers of invention, and strength of thought and expression, though not much of the true poetical character. Yet he was not insensible to the beauties of poetry; but he chiefly admired it for the intrinsic worth of the sentiment which he found it sometimes contained. Hence, the "Night Thoughts" of Dr. Young was always a favourite with him. But both the philosophical and moral cast of his mind subsequently led him to delight in works of truth and fact, rather than in those of fiction, and ultimately superinduced a prejudice against all sorts of adorning.

He travelled occasionally in company with Mr. Wesley; and on one journey he read to him the whole of Crousaz's "Logic" in French. From this and other knowledge of him, Mr. Wesley seems to have formed a high estimate of his abilities. He writes

in 1787, "Adam Clarke is doubtless an extraordinary young man, and capable of doing much good."

His moral and religious character was beyond all praise. In this respect his "peace flowed like a river, and his righteousness like the waves of the sea." His integrity was immovable; he held it fast with the firm and resolute grasp of a lion. Rectitude and benevolence were, indeed, the two great principles and component parts of his moral excellence. In him they were raised to an uncommon height, and each seemed to strive with the other for the mastery, incessantly "provoking one another to love and good works:" Between both, his soul seemed to be perpetually held in something like an even balance, or rather was kept in constant energy, accomplishing with cheerful and impartial devotedness the objects of each. He had a high sense of honour, but wholly unattended by pride and ambition. He would submit with all cheerfulness, and without the least affectation,—for he hated and contemned it,—to perform the meanest offices for himself, or for his friends, or for the poor; not from any meanness in his disposition, but from love: And a heart more kind and tender, more affectionate and sympathizing, never beat to the sighs of an afflicted one.

With regard to his humility, it may be said, that, however free and familiar he might be among his friends, yet among the learned, the great, and those he deemed his superiors, he was blushingly modest, almost to weakness. The following sentences, extracted from a private letter, will show that he felt, perhaps, unduly, in such circumstances:—"I have lately drawn up a Record Essay, at the desire of the right honourable the commissioners, in consequence of which I was called before them; and this during the sitting of the district-meeting. I went. They took up my Essay, went through it part by part, confirmed every sentiment, and adopted every proposal. I felt myself rather awkward in the presence of lords; but I got through well, and received no small portion of honour. Some of them discoursed very familiarly with me, as did also the Speaker. I was with them about an hour and a half. Should I ever have another interview with them, I shall not fear them so much as I did previous to my late meeting." The same child-like simplicity and sense of inferiority were commonly observed in him while conversing with men of great learning and abilities, such as Professor Porson; for whose penetrating intellect and great

attainments he had the highest reverence; and of whose death and literary character he wrote an interesting account, which was printed, chiefly for private circulation.

The same feeling, though in different proportions, attended him on all occasions. Of himself he did not entertain high notions; of his brethren he often did, and spoke in their praise, sometimes with a degree of enthusiasm. Self-taught scholars are often charged with speaking too much of themselves, in connexion with their learning, while the collisions and rivalship of the academy are thought to prevent this. To some extent it may be so; for, if a man should for the most part stand alone in the company he keeps, the practice may grow upon him as a habit, and yet he may not be a proud man. Whatever custom of this kind, or of a confident manner, has been noticed in connexion with our departed friend, who was commonly the instructer of his own circle, those who knew him best will believe, that it did not arise from pride, but rather from the warmth of his temperament and his deep conviction of the truth of his sentiments. Among the poor, the idea of condescension never seemed to cross his thoughts. He was perfectly as one of themselves, and would stoop to any thing which might contribute to their comfort. For example: While visiting the hovel of distress and poverty, and perceiving, that, from the condition of the bed, it must be a very uneasy one, he has had the patient removed for a few minutes, and straitened up the cordage himself with great dexterity.

It was his piety, the sustaining sense of the Divine Presence, the conscientious conviction that he was serving God in a high and responsible employment, and the all-absorbing influence of his subject upon his own mind;—it was these, and neither pride nor hardihood, (for he disliked the gaze of the public, and even of mixed company,) that supplied him with the admirable self-possession and command of his thoughts which was never known to forsake him, either in the evolution of his arguments, or the glow of his applications.

From the powerful workings of his peculiar temperament, he might sometimes be pushed beyond the line of a cool judgment; but even here, the extreme tenderness of his conscience was apparent. For example: In his earlier days some fanatical persons had endeavoured to convince him, that his literary occupations would destroy his piety. He fell into the snare;

and, from the fear of offending God, vowed that he would never read Latin more; which he observed for some considerable time, till Mr. Wesley, hearing of the circumstance, reproved him, and insisted that he should instantly abandon the resolution. Had this foolish purpose been carried into effect, the church and the world must have suffered the incalculable loss of those biblical expositions, those important labours in behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society and other institutions, and much of that peculiar effectiveness of his popular and powerful preaching, which we believe have, under God, been the means of saving very many souls.

His was equally the piety of the understanding, the conscience, and the heart; scriptural and rational, fervent and cheerful. There is good reason to believe that his private devotions were regular and frequent; and, if we may judge from the general frame and temper of his mind and conduct, whatever shyness, through misunderstanding or otherwise, there might be between him and his friends, nothing of this kind was suffered to exist between his God and him. His prayers were usually distinguished by a holy and reverential boldness, as if he spoke to One with whom he was familiar, to One of whom he had an inexpressible estimation, but with respect to whom the predominant feeling of his heart was love. They were dignified, but simple; they were fervent, but often brief; they were literally collects, in which the whole collected meaning and ardour of his soul, for the time being, were darted forth at once. And, by dwelling with peculiar astonishment and rapture, as he often did, on the love of God to fallen man, his faith and confidence increased both the fervour and the efficacy of his prayers.

Besides this, in all the relations of life,—as pastor, husband, father, master, friend, and companion,—he was remarkably affectionate, condescending, affable, gentle, kind, meek, humble, cheerful, courteous, and communicative. False greatness is proud, austere, and inaccessible; seeks concealment, and seems to fear the disclosure of its real sordidness. True greatness, on the contrary, as exemplified in that great man, is free and open, familiar and complaisant; is ready to be touched and handled, bends sweetly to inferiors, and, with a natural dignity, erects itself again. This makes us, in some sort, one with our superiors; our awe is mingled with esteem and love; we admire

the height of such greatness, without any mortifying recurrence to our own contrasted lowness.

The general conduct of our venerated friend, as a minister, an author, and an active co-adjutor in numerous designs of public and of private usefulness, corresponded with this general character of his intellectual greatness and goodness combined; was in harmony with his principles and capabilities, and constantly reminding us of the noble stock from which it sprung.

As a preacher, though he might, in some instances, be contemned by the admirers of elaborate, artificial eloquence, of studied grace and euphony, of methodical exactness and imaginative brilliancy; yet he possessed, beyond all doubt, even if the unbounded popularity and success of fifty years were the only proof, the essentials of a great preacher. He himself thought this popularity was chiefly owing to the mighty power of the essential and peculiar doctrines of Methodism, which usually called forth all his fervour. He would sometimes say, with his own characteristic expressiveness, "By constant hammering at these, I can out-congregation them all." This opinion was unquestionably just to some extent. But many others, who have preached the same doctrines, have not been favoured with such vast success.

The truth seems to be, that God, in his sovereignty, accompanied the labours of this distinguished minister with an unusual effusion of his Holy Spirit; for, no intellectual, or even moral, qualities of his discourses, admirable as they were, will fully solve the problem of his matchless popularity. His matter, it is true, was rich and copious; his heart was warm, and he possessed the power of selecting from his stores, almost at once, the suitable materials for the instant occasion, which he poured forth with energy and freedom, quite unshackled by the stiff severity of artificial preparation. His plan was to prepare his mind, rather than his paper of particular arrangements; to keep the fountain full, and he knew, that at his bidding it would flow; and by his commanding genius he gave the proper measure and direction to the streams. He was not altogether negligent of special preparation for the pulpit, particularly when some great public opportunity was presented for accomplishing an object of great usefulness. But his peculiar method was not in all respects to be generally followed. It was, however, the

reverse of that which some have adopted, who make up for the neglect of mental cultivation, by bending all their little strength, at certain times, to compose a discourse: "This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

His attachment to Methodism was principled, and cordial, and co-eval with his life. However he might sometimes differ from his brethren in the Conference, or they from him, as to particular measures, his admiration of the doctrines and discipline of the system, as well as of the preachers and the people as a body, was very high; so high, that some, on this account, have pronounced him a zealot. Considering the whole of his accumulated labours, in the work of saving souls,—the grand object of Methodism;—his preaching, his writings, his efforts for missions, for schools, and for other useful establishments; the active interest he took, in former years, in all its public affairs; the diligent discharge of his official duties universally; and the influence of his character;—the Christian public will, no doubt, view him, to the latest posterity, as having performed the most extraordinary services in favour of the cause. That cause, so dear to his heart, so long demonstrated in his experience, as beyond all question a great work of God, he never blinked, or ceased to recommend by his counsels, and honour by his bright example, before the whole world; but nobly defended its economy, and enforced its peculiar doctrines, especially wherever, in his "Commentary," an occasion occurred; and showed, by a bequest for the relief of its chapels, that, in death, he could not but remember the Zion of his attached youth, of the successful labours of his manly strength; and which was the object of his paternal solicitude, when, with hoary hairs and multiplied infirmities, he braved the hazards of the deep, still further to extend the sphere of its regenerating institutions.

One usual object with him in the pulpit, as well as in many of his writings, was to explain first the words, and then the things, of his subject. When this was finished, he proceeded to apply the considerations which he judged of most importance, with great strength of reasoning, and infusing extraordinary warmth into his appeals and exhortations. Here he mightily excelled, and here he usually produced his most striking, his happiest, and most lasting effects. His sermons were also distinguished throughout by a most interesting heartiness, and a glow of spiritual sentiment, accompanied with the most enchanting

simplicity that ever added beauty to the greatness of a great man.

With respect to his learning, the learned must decide; and we believe they have decided. But if we cannot judge of the thing itself, we may be allowed to set a value on its effects. We are sure that learning, or something else, in that extraordinary man, has thrown a bright and profitable light both upon the record and the plan of our redemption. On this subject we may expect conflicting and extravagant opinions. That he should have been profound, and critical, and absolutely unparalleled in every branch of learning and of study, is not to be believed of any man that ever lived; and he was himself the last person in the world to make the least approach to any such pretensions. On the other hand, we heed not the witticisms of those who would insinuate, that he was not, in the main, a man of deep, and accurate, and extensive learning. This his readers in general, though not complete judges, may justly deem to be improbable. It is most likely, the truth lies between the two extremes, and much nearer the side of extravagant eulogium than the other of mean and pitiful depreciation. Injustice may be done to his venerable name in both ways. The word "stupendous" may be sometimes foolishly resounded in his praise, while small defects, and unimportant pamphlets written by him, are sarcastically placed in full view, to the suppression of unquestionable excellence. By such insidious methods Lord Bacon himself might be rendered an object of scorn and contempt. It is thus the favourite scale is assisted by the hand in balancing the merits and defects of a writer. But to enter into particulars on this very grave and copious subject, might well be deemed as going very much beyond our depth. Whatever may be the peculiar and profound signification put upon the term "learning," and however he may have been even greatly excelled in certain lines of study, for our own parts, we believe, that both for variety and quantity of useful knowledge, or knowledge in the general, Adam Clarke was not surpassed by any individual of his time. But, what is still a brighter gem in the crown of his fame, he has applied the whole immensity of his stores to the best and noblest uses of which they were susceptible; and has frequently affirmed in conversation, that he never studied any subject, however recondite and curious, but with a conscientious view to promote in some way, more or less, the great objects of his duty as a minister of Christ.

He had studied most of the sciences with great assiduity ; the arts of rhetoric and of composition, as we have said, he deliberately undervalued. As to languages, he paid the greatest attention to those termed "oriental." Several of the European languages he did not profess to know perfectly. His translation of Sturm was made, not from the German, but from the French, edition. It does not appear that he was very extensively acquainted with the German critics and theologians in general. It was true he made the great body of his knowledge subservient to divinity, and with admirable effect ; but had his studies been less general, or at least, as to many of them, more superficial ; had he concentrated his talents, his time, and his native powers of thinking, so as to originate and perfect some great work in one department of theology, he would most likely have excelled himself. Lord Bacon and Sir Edward Coke were both lawyers ; yet the latter, with a far inferior mind, greatly surpassed the former in the profession, merely because he directed the whole vigour of his life to this single study.

His works, on the whole, are as precious as they are voluminous. To analyze them would also be the labour of a volume. They are written with strong sense, fervent piety, extensive knowledge, and in a clear and nervous style. Even when he wrote on subjects not within the range of theology, he discovered great talents. His two Essays, presented to the lords of the record-commission, were pronounced, in the judgment of professors and gentlemen, themselves deeply versed in those things, as "very lucid and masterly productions." Even his little Essay on the letters of the alphabet shows the hand of a master, the mind of a close and independent thinker.

All his writings tend directly to usefulness, and the major part of them to usefulness the most important that can exercise the talents of a Christian philanthropist,—the winning souls to Christ, and the edifying of believers "on their most holy faith." In this respect, his "Commentary" stands very high. Though critical and literary, above all other English commentaries embracing the whole Bible, it is also spiritual and practical, much beyond what might have been expected from a work of so much learning ; and, perhaps, the unlettered Christian, who has the happiness to possess it, is no less frequently heard resounding its praises, because of the profit he receives from its pages, than the critical inquirer, on account of the valuable accessions it gives to his

knowledge. The author has, in fact, so simplified his learning, at least in many instances, as to combine both objects in the same exposition. In many cases this, of course, could not be done; and none should be blamed for not accomplishing a contradiction. That the work has some considerable defects, no one certainly will have the courage to deny. This the excellent author himself was free to admit. Much of it, he observed, was written in his younger days; and in his latter years he had carefully prepared a corrected and improved copy for a new edition when it should be wanted. To name no other, one principal defect of the work, in the judgment of many, is the almost total omission to explain the sense of the prophetic Scriptures, owing to the conviction of the author, that prophecy is not susceptible of any clear and certain explanation. But, surely, if events can at all remove the veil, it would have been highly gratifying to his friends and the public, had he favoured them with some comprehensive views of its application to the past, supposing he had declined to say any thing as to the future. His opinion is quite the opposite extreme to that of its literal fulfilment in a fanciful sense, which now seems to absorb almost the whole attention of some persons: So difficult it is for even great and wise men always to avoid excess in their speculations!

But the work, as a whole, is, we believe, universally allowed to be a noble monument of the piety and talents of its author. Many portions of it have been admirably executed. We might mention the Pentateuch, the book of Job, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. On Job he exercised much time and pains, thinking out his opinions on that difficult but interesting book with more than ordinary care and research. And with regard to the Acts, he writes, "London, January, 1814: Acts will soon be finished. It has cost me more labour than any other part of this work. I think it by far the best I have yet done." And if the opinion of an author, on his own writings, be admitted as authority, the comment on the books of Moses was also among the most successful efforts of his pen. With regard to some other books, he had the candour to allow, that they did not by any means come up to his wishes; and perhaps the truth is, his strength of mind, gigantic as it was, could not be uniformly sustained throughout the whole of this prodigious undertaking; especially as it was only one of the innumerable and arduous tasks of his most laborious life.

The bibliographical information contained in his "Dictionary," and "View of the Succession of Sacred Literature," is extraordinary; especially considering his unfavourable circumstances, as an active superintendent and preacher in the Methodist Connexion. To persons engaged in literary and theological researches, these writings are of great value; the knowledge they supply of scarce and valuable works on the most important subjects connected with ecclesiastical learning, must be highly prized by students in divinity; and the whole is interestingly enlivened by his own characteristic and instructive observations. It might seem, indeed, impossible, yet the fact is indisputable, that, notwithstanding the multiplicity and magnitude of the books to which he refers, he trusted not, in general, to other bibliographers, but, wherever he could seize upon the volumes, carefully analyzed and described them for himself.

His unexampled industry was both an integral part and a general principle—at once a cause and an effect — of his greatness. He was great in summoning his industry to employments of such difficulty and such hazard; but he was greater in the full attainment of its marvellous fruits. It was this industry, pursued with matchless energy, that made his mighty powers to tell with such force upon almost every subject to which he directed his attention. Learned men, who can appreciate such labours, are, no doubt, astonished at the efforts which could produce both the kind and the quantity of his writings. But this view of the subject falls very far short of a complete and just estimation. Let us add: The incredible pains required to the self-tuition which prepared him for his work; his fatiguing search after books and manuscripts; the extraordinary labours of a Methodist preacher, which for many years he carried on in connexion with such studies; the sermons he preached; the sick he visited; the journeys he performed; the public business he promoted; the private interviews he granted; the numerous essays he composed, which have not yet seen the light; and the many thousands of letters which he wrote,—and long ones, too, on all kinds of subjects; for, perhaps, he was never excelled as a rapid, faithful, and affectionate correspondent:—Let all these onerous proceedings be considered, among others which we have not now space to add, and then some idea may be formed of the unprecedented industry and energy required to conduct them to so successful an issue.

The noble purpose of his soul, at the beginning of his public life, which has been already given to the world, cannot be too frequently reprinted. Let us hear it again:—"I am determined, by the grace of God, to conquer and die, and have taken the subsequent motto, and have placed it before me on the mantel-piece:—'Stand thou as a beaten anvil to the stroke; for it is the property of a good warrior, to be flayed alive, and yet to conquer.'" In the same spirit of unbending heroism is the following advice in a private letter to a young man:—"Study yourself half to death, and pray yourself whole to life. Do something,—something that you can look at,—something that will be worth having when you are not worth a rush. I declare, I think if I were you, I would dig, water, manure, lop off, tie up, lead along, &c. &c. &c. till my garden should bloom and blossom like the rose, and my whole ground be like Carmel."

While others slept, or banquetted, or idled out their despicable days in gossiping and folly, he kept the glorious harvest of this issue full in view, and ploughed with all his heifers, reckless of the sun and rain.

Thus he "ran,"—for, in regard to him, the word was often literally applicable,—thus he ran his lengthened and laborious, but honourable, career; mindless of all things which entered not into the essence of the duty just in hand. He cared not to interrupt his intensity by looking at the busy idleness of men. Their politics and pleasures, and the more private concerns of other people around him, could scarcely divert him for one moment from the vigorous prosecution of what he deemed to be his duty. Even consequences seem to have been, in some sense, forgotten by him, in the active means by which they were effected. He strove "to keep a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man," and left events to the disposal of an unerring Providence. But God was with him to guide the arrow to the mark. Uncommon usefulness attended him through life. The young men he instructed, the souls he converted, the saints he established, the afflicted he consoled, have been, unquestionably, very numerous, and will, no doubt, be "a crown of rejoicing" for him at the last day, of more than ordinary brightness. And, to the end of time, not his writings only, but also, we trust, the animating example of his extraordinary life, will continue to be greatly serviceable to the church and to the world. His life, indeed, is a study for a statesman

or a warrior; and if some men in commerce, or in trade, would transcribe the wonderful decision of his character into their own, it would multiply their fortunes.

Another principle of his mental greatness was his piety. In the natural constitution of his mind he was somewhat humoursome and restless, and very prone to indulge in metaphysical investigations; and, perhaps, with only a small portion of religion, he might have been very much unsettled, both in his theological opinions, and in the habits of his life. But decided, powerful, and progressive piety banded all his other noble qualities, directed them to their capable elevation of improvement, and kept them up to their own due pitch, beyond what could have been effected by any principles of merely human strength. He was, also, by nature, strange as it may seem, inapt to take instruction, slow of apprehension, could scarcely fit himself to the yoke, and was taught, at first, the rudiments of learning with some difficulty. But he constantly professed, and sometimes in the pulpit, that his conversion to God produced so great a change in his mental powers, so liberated and enlarged them, that ever after he found the benefit of its influence in his literary exercises.

Another cause of his greatness may be found in the discipline of his mental struggles, and of the vast variety of impressive situations, companies, and circumstances through which he passed during the most improvable part of his life. His father seems to have kept him, with careful strictness, to the painful labours of rudimental education; then followed his spiritual exercises, his anxieties in regard to the ministry, and the rigours he imposed upon himself, connected with his studies; then the unkindness of individuals, and, in many circuits, the hard fare, and labours, and lodgings of the preachers of those times. These were the gymnastic trainings which gave additional health, and tone, and nerve to a mental constitution originally vigorous. Thus our aspiring "David went on and grew great;" or, as the words are, "went on, going and growing; and the Lord God of Hosts was with him."

To men of a certain cast, all such privations and collisions are extremely favourable, as the means of giving mental power. The mind naturally exerts itself under suffering; which, in unsanctified spirits, we may just observe, is the deathless principle of their future punishment; and is even now illustrated

where the culprit cannot faint beneath the sense of his approaching fate, but swells and stiffens to sustain the dreadful penalty which he knows he must endure. In the fortitude of a righteous man, the principle is the same. The mind rises in its own defence, to meet its inflictions, and to summon up its strength; than which, nothing can be better calculated to exercise and, by that means, to invigorate its faculties, as well as moral principle. For the same reason, the exquisite pleasure connected with wisdom and holiness improves the mind, by wakening up its dormant powers.

He was forced from his retirement to mingle with mankind; and possessed many rich opportunities of studying human nature, in a variety of its most instructive forms; and even the ever-changing scenery of his successive marches would be nourishment to his imagination and his sensibility. All these would be as if they were so many philosophical experiments, illustrating to his conception the principles of things in general. It is only, however, to a peculiar class of observers that universal nature is thus an ever-open seminary of the most impressive instructions;—instructions that insensibly dilate and mould the mind: And such was the class to which he belonged. The loftiest mountain seldom strikes with any sense of the sublime the clown that labours at its base, while the feeling and reflective child of nature swells with the force of the sentiments it inspires.

We repeat, that the nature and magnitude of the subjects which he studied gave him greatness. He has said, without the least reference to its effect upon himself, that oriental literature was peculiarly calculated to sublime the mind. He loved to be familiar with men and books, where greatness, combined with goodness, might be closely contemplated. In this view he was ceaseless in his praise of Mr. Wesley. On the same principle he admired, and studied, and, in some degree, caught the moral dignity of Dr. Johnson. St. Augustine's "City of God" was a work on which he set a high value, because of the prodigious reach of mind which he believed it contained. And many others might be mentioned, which he had studied on the same principle. In this manner, as the labours of his life grew upon him, his mind also grew in proportionable strength to meet them.

But his greatness essentially consisted in the combination of

his distinguished powers and excellences;—capacity, energy, piety, and a wide arena and full scope for the exercise and proof of all. Had one of these important requisites been wanting, the whole must have failed; the snapping of a single link would have ruined the whole series. Suppose, for example, the absence of piety; and what would all the rest have done? May not the same be affirmed of original capacity, of industry, and of the means of application? Of course we refer to his intellectual greatness; for it cannot be supposed that, without the whole armament of the above association, he could not have been great simply in the sense of goodness; else what shall be said of thousands unspeakably beneath his mental capabilities? And his simplicity was far from having the most unimportant share in the imposing aggregate, but gave a higher interest to his greatest qualities; like a transparent cloud on distant rocks, it imparted a peculiar softness and enlargement to them all.

We may notice the harmony and proportions of his extraordinary character, as giving a more powerful interest to the whole, than if that harmony and those proportions had been merely seen in miniature. The beautiful, but contracted, model of Grecian architecture which adorns the cemetery in Liverpool would have the effect of extreme grandeur were it extended to twenty times its present size, not from magnitude alone, but from the principles of its structure carried out, so as to add sublimity to beauty. There was greatness in the whole of the essential principles of the noble mind we have been contemplating, if even we admit their failure in certain applications of them;—a corrective balance among all; which, in itself, was greatness. No parts were overgrown, and none were stinted; but a certain due relationship and keeping, at least in the general, pervaded the character. And they acted and re-acted on each other very much to their mutual advantage. Great views produced great purposes, while these produced practices of corresponding greatness. His application gave success, which, in its turn, strongly tended to stimulate him to still greater exertions; and the accumulations of his knowledge, which, to some, might seem to threaten the extinction of his piety, only added fresh fuel and intenseness to its flame.

If at any time this harmony appeared to be disturbed, it was not the consequence of any counter-principle or intended delinquency, but might rather be considered the too ardent

working of the proper principle itself,—the trembling of the needle, which, notwithstanding, must soon settle true to the pole; it was an excess of ardour in that which was good; and though, of course, it was so far blamable, yet justice requires us to recollect, that it was widely different from deliberate and actual dereliction of propriety.

As to politics, he was extremely loyal to the monarchy, but frequently disliked the measures of the ministry. To the principles of the system so strenuously supported by Mr. Pitt, he was strongly opposed, believing that their tendency was to enslave mankind. But on such subjects he did not consider himself as at all an authority, as he seldom entered into the serious examination of such matters. During the whole of the late war, he scarcely ever cast his eye on the public prints; not merely on account of his disapproval of the policy which led to the contest, but because, as a Christian and a man of humanity, he could feel no kind of pleasure in the daily perusal of despatches which were filled with blood and slaughter.

To strangers and the public, he was apparently repulsive and austere, and even among his friends he would sometimes verge upon severity; but this was because he would be righteous; forgetting at the moment that a man may be "righteous over much." It was not his temperament. The bias was on the other side; for in private he was usually kindness itself, and his manners were as bland and gentle as those of a tender nurse towards a delicate and favourite child. If he spoke at times with undue strength of expression, on systems of religion different from his own, it was the ardent love of Methodism, by which God had saved his soul, that occasioned this excess; with the men who held those systems, he was often very happy to hold a generous communion. It was with great difficulty he could be prevailed on to decide, or give consent, in negotiations relating to his valuable services on public occasions. This, however, was no doubt partly owing to a mixed feeling of unreasonable modesty, of unwillingness to disoblige his friends, and of an unnecessary fear, which he expressed, of the great uncertainty there was of his fulfilling such engagements. There was, indeed, a general tendency in his mind to a high state of feeling. This was frequently observable in his language, his wit, in all his motions, not excepting the energy of his looks, and his walk.

Little singularities and discrepancies have, perhaps, too care-

fully been marked by his observers. But let it be remembered, in the first place, that there was no insincerity, no vanity, no proud perversity, in the adoption of these. If there were, he missed his object completely; for those peculiar habits were sometimes a source of inconvenience to himself as well as others. These defects lay rather in the physiology and instinct of a warm temperament, than in any obliquity of his principle and purpose.

Again: They were not always rightly named "eccentricities;" they were in some instances bold and proper deviations from the unprofitable usages of life; and the true eccentricity in such cases lay on that side. And even here, he often showed the power of his intellect, for he had his reasons; and he frequently discovered, that, even in smaller concerns, he judged by his common sense, and a constant regard, not to current opinion, but to the nature and absolute propriety of things.

And finally: Let all the world know, that, in the grand principles of character and duty, he showed a noble consistency and dignity through life. Here, there was no hesitation, nothing changeable or contradictory. Compared with his excellence in this respect, the minor things to which we have now adverted are but dust upon the balance. We do not, however, mean to defend them as absolutely unexceptionable, or as virtues of the highest eminence. We believe, on the contrary, that some of them were positive defects. But there needs be no fastidious anxiety to blink them. His name requires not the gratuitous support of unqualified and boundless encomiums. The bright picture can afford to have its imperfections examined by the nicest eye.

The strength of his mental faculties was wonderfully preserved to the last, though his preaching could not be expected to show the perfection of his former days; and if an inclination towards garrulity, or other infirmities of age, were occasionally discernible, they only served to add fresh interest to his hoary appearance, as autumnal tints are seasonably beautiful, and indicate the ripeness and maturity of the year.

We might now proceed with an estimate of this great man, as put in apposition with some other able champion of truth and righteousness; not with any view to place him on the vantage-ground of an invidious exaltation; but to assist our conceptions, and give force to our impressions, while the subjects mutually gain by the amicable comparison; in some such manner as Rapin has formed his instructive contrasts of illustrious men

of ancient times. Here it would be pleasant to show our departed friend by the side of his beloved Wesley; both now met again, inseparably one for ever; and, after having turned "many to righteousness," shining "as the stars for ever and ever." But we have already overstepped the bounds we had at first prescribed, and must finish this discourse. The reader will perceive, that in our observations the same topics have sometimes recurred, but always, it is hoped, in some different point of light.

I have ventured literally with a trembling sense of great unfitness for the task, to furnish out this small but grateful tribute to the memory of a friend, whose paternal kindness in my earlier days, and never since withdrawn, laid me under obligations which I never can discharge; and who, if indeed there be any portion of this offering itself deserving the attention of his friends, may be considered so far, but no farther, as its author.

His numerous works are before the public; his character was best known to his private friends. Let both be considered in connexion with the subject of our text, and we believe it may be said with confidence, that Adam Clarke was an eminent example of true greatness; a minister, a writer, and a Christian man, much above the ordinary standard of these characters; a class rather than an individual; not a star, but a constellation; a lofty pattern of faithful and ardent devotedness in the most responsible and difficult departments of the service of God to which men can be called on earth; a noble evidence of the value of sanctified abilities; and an instructive instance of the power of religion in forming human nature to a character of righteousness and charity; a man, of whom it may be said, as truly as it ever was affirmed of any statesman or patriot, "He would lay down his life for his country, and would not do a base thing to save it; one who would neither tread upon an insect, nor crouch to an emperor."

Let us be truly thankful, that we have enjoyed the effective labours of this able minister of the New Testament for so lengthened a period. Ashamed of our immeasurable distance from the example he has set us, let us now catch something of his celestial ardour,—of his spiritual if not his intellectual greatness,—and henceforth endeavour to copy what is imitable in his numerous and distinguished virtues; and let us glorify our God in him.

SERMON VIII.

THE PEACE OF GOD RULING IN THE HEART.

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.—Colossians iii. 15.

Before we rightly know, either by inquiry or experience, what is the true and discriminating character of this peace, we may conclude, from the emphatic language of Scripture,—every where employed to magnify and recommend it,—that we ought to spare no pains to understand and to obtain it. It is, we may presume, at once a blessing of incomparable value and importance.

In the language of men the term has always been chosen to express the richest satisfactions, both civil and domestic, as well as the most enviable state of the individual mind, when retired into itself, and wholly separated from external objects. But in the vocabulary of inspiration, like other terms first applied to natural and then to heavenly things, it becomes infinitely comprehensive; embracing interests and transactions, similar, in some respects, to those of its primary acceptation, but of far loftier character, and of boundless extent. Thus language attains to its noblest use, and is the admirable instrument, not only of strengthening our vision to behold the things of God, "the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," but is also the stirring means, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, of awakening the soul into powerful and successful strivings after the possession of them.

It was, therefore, with much reason, and with a grand conception of the subject, that the Jews applied the expression "peace," both as to outward prosperity and spiritual blessings, in the sense of "abundance" or "perfection;" a sense that seems to shine out, more or less, in almost all the various meanings given to the term. Of Abraham it was said, "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age;" that is, shall not only be exempt from trouble, but "full of

years," there being no deduction from their complement, or from your happiness. Again: "He is our peace, who hath made both one,"—"making in himself one new man, so making peace;" for friends who are separated by dissension are dismembered as to union, and each is thus deprived of no small part of his entire and proper being. Our most perfect state, indeed, consists in the possession of all things necessary to our happiness or prosperity,—the most frequent acceptation of the word in the writings of both Testaments.

This general view of the peace of God, as the privilege of man, whose nature craves and is capable of endless supplies of enjoyment, stamps the subject with a kind of infinity; and demands our most serious and inquisitive attempts to draw it out to view in the several parts of which it essentially consists. Confiding in the sanction and assistance of the Holy Spirit, we may hope to understand what is strictly meant by the "peace of God;" how it rules in the heart; and by what means its reign may be confirmed and secured.

I. The question, "What is peace?" is not fully answered by replying, "It is the tranquil enjoyment of prosperity." It is rather this enjoyment, considered as the termination of conflict and misery; and as deriving much of its interest from the means of its accomplishment, and from the secret charm of contrast between the existing calm and the stormy state of things out of which it was produced. This is eminently true of the great work of our salvation, which will eternally suggest the idea of our past condemnation; heightening the intrinsic glories of heaven, as the redeemed shout forth, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

"Peace" has been for ages the common salutation in many Asiatic countries. That this friendly form of address should have at first referred to war is not at all improbable, considering the predatory and hostile habits of wandering tribes and individuals, who, at meeting with each other, as entire strangers, might find it necessary to throw off mutual suspicion by an instant avowal of friendly intentions. Or the rainbow, the frequent and affecting promise of God's peace to the postdiluvian world, might suggest that men ought also to announce their good-will towards each other in some consolatory manner. Afterwards, as peace is

one great cause of civil prosperity, the word, perhaps, acquired its more extended and general sense, without any direct allusion to previous or possible hostility between the parties. We may also observe, that peace, as simply signifying contentment, or the effect of friendship with God, and of conformity to the will of God, may be said to belong to angels, and to have been the happiness of Adam in a state of innocence. The primary design of the "Gospel of peace" is to restore us to our first condition; and then, by this means, to enlarge our peace or blessedness, far beyond the limits even of that delightful state of things.

The ennobling spirit of the Gospel, however, led, as we may learn from the language of our Lord and of the apostles, to a spiritual use, and great extension of the common salutation; and made it proper to the genuine affection and surpassing privileges of the Christian brotherhood. In the ordinary communications of the people of God, in those happy days of the church, temporal prosperity seems to have been almost forgotten in the far more interesting and invaluable blessings of the soul. By them the general salutation, in its lower sense, was left to worldly men. The following are apostolic specimens, not only of benediction, but of the manner in which they sometimes accosted one another: "To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Here, what a copious exposition of the peace in question is found, in the other very expressive terms with which it is associated!

But the grand and fundamental meaning is that of peace with God, or a sense and certainty of present reconciliation with the offended Jehovah, in the heart and conscience of a sinner, who has submitted to the evangelical terms of such reconciliation. This is the most astonishing transaction in its method of accomplishment which the world has ever witnessed, and affords evidence that the character and consequences of this peace, to correspond with the scheme, must also be extraordinary. Right conceptions of this method are of the last importance in regard to our knowledge of the peace to which it leads.

Behold the sinner in his hot and horrible rebelliousness! "He stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers." Does the law

of God command him? For that very reason he acts in opposition to it. Does he feel the effects of Divine indignation? Even the justice which occasioned them he reviles with reproachful words. He is at perfect enmity with God. He hates his holiness; and, in the bitterness of wishing, dethrones and annihilates him, saying in his heart, "There is no God."

But this warfare should not, cannot last; for "God is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?" The purity, the righteousness, the truth of God, are all ready to direct the bolts of his omnipotence against the intolerable wretch. What follows? the instant crash of his destruction? No! Peace, peace is unexpectedly and loudly offered. "By whom? By the rebel, who ought to be the first, if he had the power, to throw down his arms, and to seek for reconciliation?" Not at all. But by him who is the only injured and insulted party, and who could justly in a moment "cast both body and soul" of the sinner "into hell fire."

"But is it equitable to show mercy to so foul an offender? Shall holiness be lightly prized, order neglected, justice defeated, the truth of Heaven falsified, and law and legislation contemned and dishonoured?" Not in anywise. Our peace is purchased at its proper price. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." He suffered, "that he might reconcile both" Jews and Gentiles "unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby," that is, the enmity between God and sinners; "and came and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Here, the reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, mentioned in the context, is avowedly dependent on that of "both unto God" by the blood of Jesus. Without this chief bond of union the other must have been impossible.

In the earliest times, covenants of reconciliation, whether between individuals or nations, appear to have been consummated by sacrifice. Hence Christ is called "a covenant of the people," that is, a sacrifice of atonement. Covenant in one sense signifies "a purifier," or means of removing the offences which may have long prevented the union of the parties, who "when they cut the calf in twain, passed between the parts thereof," and, meeting, took an oath of future amity.

This ceremony was observed, not only by the Jews, but also

by several Heathen nations in ratifying their leagues of peace and alliance; on which occasion they poured a libation of mixed wine, at the moment the sacrifice was killed, to indicate the perfect union of the parties contracting.

The sacrifice not only pointed to the just destruction of him who should first break the compact, but also to the satisfaction which justice required for past offences. Sinful man must not approach his God without "a purifier;" and the blood of Christ alone, because it is a true atonement, "cleanseth from all sin." In his "body which was broken" for us, the offended Father and the offending sinner meet, between whom an everlasting covenant of peace is ratified and sealed. And as, when the law of Moses was established, the people feasted in their peace-offerings on a part of the sacrifice, in token of their reconciliation with God, so, in the holy sacrament, and at all times by faith, we may eat the flesh and drink the blood of Him "who loved us, and gave himself for us;" which sacrament is both the sign and the seal of our peace and acceptance.

This, it is material to observe, is a mutual reconciliation,—not simply our conversion to God, and the removal of our enmity against him, as asserted by those who deny the atonement; for these are rather the consequences than the causes of what is strictly termed "the reconciliation." The just anger of God, which bears, indeed, no tincture of malignant enmity, must be removed, as well as the sinner's bitterness of opposition to him. And how should this be done but by an atonement to justify the forgiveness of sins that are past? To place the removal of this anger, which arises from the whole of the sinner's life and character, on the removal of his present enmity, is to reverse and vitiate the entire plan of evangelical salvation,—is to poison the pure water of life at the fountain, and tempt the unhappy sinner to content himself with a spurious instead of a genuine and solid peace.

If, however, when convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit fixing in his conscience a bitter sense of its sinfulness and curse, he believes in Christ, that is, exercises an undoubted trust and confidence in his sufficient and accepted merits, in order to receive the peace or favour of the Judge, "whose wrath abideth on him," he shall certainly be saved; saved in that very moment, "the Spirit itself bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God;" and may loftily sing out his joy, at having found this

peace, saying, "O Lord I will praise thee: Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

As far as feeling is concerned, peace and joy may be considered as synonymous; differing only in degree, one resembling the more tranquil movements of the ocean, and the other the swell of its highest tides. Peace with God may be constant and without interruption; joy exceeds it for the time, but with Christians of weak faith is only occasional.

This peace is not merely negative, implying the removal of the heavy burden of sin, and curse, and fear; but is powerfully positive, arising from a sense of friendship and communion with God; a soft and gentle fire, which is felt to live and burn in the heart with unceasing activity. The cloud, indeed, of God's displeasure is removed; but, in addition to this, the sweetest beams of his paternal favour shine forth upon the soul with the most animating brightness and vigour. This is evident from the language of Scripture expressive of its increase. A negative has no degrees. But this peace may be "great," may be "perfect," may "flow like a river;" all which epithets import that it has some perennial and swelling sources of supply.

This may well be conceived, because it comes direct from God, who "creates" it; not merely as he creates all the modes and measures of enjoyment connected with its infinity of causes, but as in this happy case he gives it from himself; his grace and love, and not natural acts of the mind, constituting the proportion of delight experienced. He who tastes of honey has a pleasure answering exactly to the quality and quantity, and other circumstances, of the substance received; and he who does a good work feels a certain pleasure peculiarly annexed to such an action; but this peace is not imparted with such limited calculations. Strong faith, it is true, may bring strong consolation; but this is the faith of a believer, trusting in his God for that particular purpose, and differs from the justifying faith which entitles the returning sinner to a saving interest in all the blessings of the Gospel. Remission of sin gives life to the condemned criminal;

and in this respect all who believe, whatever be the strength of their faith, are on a level. They are all equally preserved from death; are all equally entitled to eternal life, though in subsequent experience they may enjoy it "more abundantly."

The peace, therefore, which immediately succeeds to pardon is not measured according to the faith of the penitent; for, his faith respects the pardon and its sacrificial grounds, not the peace. He hopes, indeed, for peace, and he believes, in order to obtain it: But peace is not the immediate object of his faith. The merit of Christ comes between. Then peace succeeds. For this reason, the degree of peace, or consciousness and feeling of what has been transacted, lies much in the sovereign will of the Divine Acceptor.

It is true, the believer, who trusts in God for some specified privilege, also refers, chiefly and primarily, to the faithfulness of him who promised it, and not to the privilege, except as a consequence; confides in God, and then the blessing follows. But reconciliation is widely different and superior to the blessing of an ordinary promise. One is the whole genus, and the other is a single species. The latter admits of a limit; and both the faith and the promise of the case proportion the communication to the views and wants of the suppliant, whose strength is according to his day: The former is absolutely boundless; nor could we know the whole of its vast extent and preciousness, and live. So much, therefore, and no more, of the peace or joy of pardon must be let out upon the soul as suits her weakness, or God in love and wisdom sees proper to impart.

But this chiefly refers to the season of the Christian's first enjoyment of this peace. In the progress of the Divine life the conscious blessing may be much increased, by the incessant activity and claims of his faith. His reconciliation gives him a title to "all the fulness of God," and he may draw at pleasure from this fathomless resource. In Christ he has now "boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."

It is surprising to think how any happy state of religious feeling may be confirmed, and rendered still more exquisite, by intensely reflecting on its characters and causes. Valuation and description have a mighty influence on the mind. The miser is aware of this, and frequently re-counts his treasures, down to the minutest division of the whole mass. Let the liberated penitent commence copying this example, and he will greatly improve his

enjoyment—which, at present, is, to some extent, an unexplained instinct—by a better understanding of it, and by examining the extent and firmness of the ground on which it rests. The great stock is, peace with God; but this rapidly grows up into an endless variety of stems and branches. The fountain is such, that it cannot be contained within its own proper limits, but overflows abundantly, and finds its way in streams of various breadths and depths.

Among these minor instances we may mention peace of conscience, or peace with our own hearts, because we know God is at peace with us; peace from the consciousness that all our ways are now acceptable to him; and from the pleasure of these ways, considered in themselves: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." "Our rejoicing is this: The testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." "This joy, where it is perfected," observes the excellent Wesley, "is the very foretaste of heaven itself."

But no imaginable merit on the part of the believer contributes to this peace. The comfort here is felt, and avowed to be as perfectly gratuitous as in the case of free justification first revealed to the penitent. The pleasure of serving God with conscious acceptance is only a modification of his own most gracious favour towards us. It comes to us through the channel of our own varied consciousness, arising from the nature of the sentiments and services which move us; but God himself, as our reconciled Father, is the fountain. It may taste of the vessel; still it is the true and wholesome "wine of the kingdom."

This gives testimony to the continuance of that peace which, at first, in justification, was "the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Without this obedience, we could not preserve this peace, but be "sore troubled, and go mourning all the day long." "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

Another branch of peace with God is, peace with all mankind; with the brethren, because God gives them his peace, and because they kindly accost us, in the peaceableness of their manners, dispositions, and wishes; and even with our enemies,

because we feel how reasonable it is, that we, who have been forgiven the sum of five hundred pence, should forgive the smaller sum of fifty. Nay, our sense of peace with God puts the whole soul in so happy a position and temper, as inclines her, at once, without inductive reasoning, to pour her softest charity upon every human being; and whatever storms of hostility she may sometimes meet with, in return for this amicable exercise, it is a high support and satisfaction to feel the undiminished working of this benevolent desire.

Peace with the inanimate creation, with tempestuous elements, now divested of their bitter and avenging nature, and aiding our contemplations of the God to whom we are now reconciled, and whom we supremely love;—even this lower species of the mighty blessing now in question is not without its value in our wanderings through this wilderness: "Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin."

The universe, indeed, is armed against the guilty and impenitent; and though they take the present temporary cessation for unceasing amity, the dreadful onset will come, when all terms of reconciliation shall be eternally withdrawn; but how different is the aspect of all things to the son of peace, the calm of whose mind infinitely transcends that undisturbed superiority of which some Heathens boasted! The noble language which they sometimes employ on this subject would have its true use and meaning, were it converted to the Christian faith. The doctrine of their proud teachers is figured forth as also calling men to peace, and thus it speaks: "If you will attend to me, O mortals, wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, you shall neither grieve, nor be angry, nor be compelled, nor restrained; but you shall live impassive, and free from all bondage." And the teacher subjoins, "Shall not he who enjoys this peace, proclaimed, not by Cæsar, (for how should he have it to proclaim?) but by God, through reason, be contented, when he is alone, reflecting and considering?—'To me there can no ill happen; to me there is no thief, no earthquake. All is full of peace, all full of tranquillity,—every road, every city, every assembly. My neighbour, my companion, unable to hurt me.'"

But in far other language the Fountain, with its lesser springs, of a far holier, sweeter, nobler peace, is revealed: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Not only all that rises in the terrestrial providence of God, but the unseen worlds of eternity, are included in the compact of the Christian's peace; and incalculably heighten the value of his enjoyment. The harmony which once subsisted between men and angels was turned by sin into discordance. In consequence of this breach, those happy spirits, the attendants of Jehovah, in course, withdrew when His visible glory was no longer seen on earth. Since the fall, we have not been regularly honoured with their presence and communications. We have a descending series of animated beings, but none above us; nor, indeed, would this appear to be right, the effects of the fall extending justly to all the members of his household who was attainted of this treason, but not permitted to ascend to any of the superior orders. It would seem to be improper, that they should be the visible and familiar companions of the guilty, in a world of curse and imperfection. Yet they are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." There is a lower sense in which they are at peace with us, because we are now reconciled to their Divine Lord and Master: "It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven; that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."

All these kinds of peace, united in the experience of the believer, constitute a sum, and character, and intensity of satisfaction, perfectly unparalleled. But we repeat, that the grand and master-blessing in this combination is the distinctive and abiding sense of our own personal acceptance with God. It is this, and this alone, that gives birth and body, life and colour, to every other kind of genuine peace of which the human mind is capable. In the whole banquet of existence, no viand is more strengthening, no cup is more refreshing. Among the complex emotions of the exulting believer, this is always felt to be predo-

minant, and to diffuse its own healthy and joyous temperament to every other feeling. It is in the spiritual life, what the motion of the heart is to the natural,—the commanding strain in the vast and harmonious concert of our enjoyments; and it were better the sun should cease to shine than this "candle of the Lord," which gilds our path to heaven, should be suffered to go out. Without this, indeed, there may be apathy, and levity, and what is sometimes termed "philosophical tranquillity;" but no rational, invulnerable, immortal satisfaction.

II. We come now to consider how the peace of God rules in the heart;—how it sways the entire man, exerting not a nominal but real and commanding influence over the whole economy of his mind and feelings; and, consequently, producing the most important effects both in his character and condition.

If the mere view of things imparts emotion, what may be expected from the soul already awakened into passion? "Correct your opinions," was many ages since deemed a very comprehensive and valuable maxim. On this basis was constructed a complete scheme of morals; and if the truth of God, as contained in the Scriptures, were to be the rule of that correction, the maxim would penetrate as well as teach most effectually. But when, added to this light, the mind is itself renovated, and begins to feel the glow resulting from her new affections and relations, she has already made a noble start in the career of her destiny. He acts well who enters upon duty from conviction; the same spirit works still more pleasantly and vigorously when once exhilarated by the warmth of actual exertion.

Human nature is a kingdom swayed by the joint sovereignty of principles, and habits, and passions; all of which may either be legitimate, or usurpers; but still rapidly advancing the prosperity or destruction of the state. How powerful are the passions! instance in shame, though inferior in force. "Thus did my Christian friend," says an eminent saint, "send me home ashamed of my folly, but so much strengthened by his conversation, that I felt as if the whole world insulting me would not have had power to tempt one impatient word from my lips." What energy is in the graces! Faith overcomes our mightiest foes; love casts out fear; and hope is as an anchor that keeps us sure and steadfast in the most tempestuous storms.

How mighty, then, is the peace of God! which, while it is itself a dominant impression, brings every other kind of just and

proper feeling into its own reign, as auxiliaries in the advancement of its generous designs. And its influence is greatly strengthened from the circumstance already hinted, that its power is exerted on a subject capable of government; not a merely instinctive animal, not a vitiated rebel; but the "new man, created after the image of God in righteousness and in true holiness;" a nature qualified by grace to be, at once, in a true and explicable sense, its own sovereign and subject. Carnal affections are not thus worked upon with judgment and regularity. It was far otherwise, however, with our blessed Lord, the perfect model of our humanity; who, at the grave of Lazarus, for example, when "he groaned in spirit, was troubled;" that is, as the word implies "troubled himself;" his own will and judgment stirring up his sacred soul to the precise state of feeling which was suited to the occasion. Peace is the proper element in which the "new man" lives and breathes; in which alone he can exert his native elasticity and strength.

The peace of God in the text is thought by some commentators to mean nothing more than a peaceable disposition. Though this were granted, it would not affect the accuracy of our conclusion, that a sense of peace with God is also essentially intended by the apostle. For this, as we have seen, gives birth to every other species of true peace. If, therefore, that which is least have any sway in the heart, that which is superior, and which feeds the influence of the other, must have still greater power.

In another text, however, he employs similar expressions with regard to peace; expressions which cannot possibly be interpreted as applicable to any other than the stock, and not the branch. His words are, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Here we have several proofs of a governing power. *To keep* means "to fortify," as in a garrison, against all assaults of distressing care and anxiety; and to correct and regulate our desires; for this peace, in the admirable machinery of its operations, contains a principle that retards or quickens motion, precisely as the case demands; thus tending at once to prevent all excess and defect in the state and feeling of the mind. He also affirms that it "passeth all understanding," using a word which signifies "to have dominion;" similar to the power of the Messiah's kingdom, of which Daniel says, "It shall be diverse

from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces."

In the "Wisdom of Solomon" we have the same sentiment: "But wisdom delivered from pain those that attended upon her. She defended the righteous from his enemies, and kept him safe from those that lay in wait, and in a sore conflict she gave him the victory; that he might know that godliness is stronger than all." It is, we may observe as an illustration, in this admirable sense of instinctive power, that the apostle says, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The skill and energy with which a racer manages the course is also supposed to be alluded to in the words of our text, the animating hope of the prize inducing him to summon all his sagacity and resolution to moderate, and yet with the utmost art to accelerate, his exertions, lest either he should be distanced by remissness, or exhausted by rashness.

From all these considerations taken together, it may seem, the apostle judged the consciousness of peace with God to exert a very powerful influence on the heart. And this influence is not that of pure reasoning, or eloquence, or legislative authority, (though these may rule in concert with it,) but the sweet and gentle suasion of the Holy Spirit, who inspires this peace. How much the temper and behaviour of a man are influenced by his chief joy, is observable in business, in domestic society, and in every other walk of life. To be convinced of this, we have only, for example, to notice the effect of some good news upon the individual concerned. He is now pleased with every thing, even with such things as had previously put him out of humour. The deep and lasting conviction that God is reconciled to us, is still more soothing and salutary. Sadness dejects and constricts, but joy dilates, the heart.

A sense of peace with God rules by its excellent quality. Our innumerable pleasures are all of different kinds, and, therefore, subject to a difference of valuation. Novelty, for instance, imparts a pleasure different from that of beauty. Our sense of the sublime is different from that of both; more difficult to be attained and continued; more refined and delicate; but incomparably more powerful, more delightful. Spiritual enjoyments are no less marked by variety; and among them the sense of the

pardoning love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, may well be supposed to hold a most distinguished place. Besides, it combines with other mixed feelings of gratitude and hope, and thus acquires additional richness from the several perceptions of its own immediate effects. The ancient Jews observed, that the recitation of the Scriptures produced in their minds the "kingdom of heaven," by which they meant "devotional feelings," as distinguished from a merely intellectual or natural state of the mind. It was expected, that religious feelings and practices would be perfected in the Messiah; and hence the Gospel dispensation was called "the reign of the Messiah," or the "kingdom of God;" which, St. Paul says, expounding the phrase in its noblest sense, consists, not in any outward thing, but "in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" meaning, it is heavenly and divine.

It also rules by its intensity. There are degrees, as well as kinds, of pleasure. Simply pleasant, and extremely so, are two distinct things. The greatness of this peace is not only asserted frequently in Scripture, but is also abundantly verified by experience. How transporting the harmony of that oneness with God and his kingdom, which, while it excludes all dissonance and jarring, consists of the most delightful and proportioned agreements; and is, therefore, deeply penetrating; and is justly termed "concord," as descriptive both of its nature and power! These agreements are as numerous as they are harmonious. The whole soul is full of them. An extensive class exists in the mutual relation and operation of her powers among themselves: Another, in the correspondencies between all these and God. A third is seen in those of the soul and her local state and circumstances. An infinity of such agreements is enjoyed in the serious perusal and study of the Scriptures: "Great peace have they that love God's law: And nothing shall offend them." Thus the immensity, as well as sweetness, of this music of the mind, of which, as we have said, the commanding part is peace with God, may well be supposed to produce a very strong emotion.

The pardoned sinner best can tell how sweet, how strong. He endured the dreadful storm; but in its dismal extremity, and from its thickest darkness, and far above its mountainous and monstrous waves, a gentle voice "said unto the sea, Peace, be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

If power is to be measured by its effects, he best, indeed, can tell how deep the emotion of the wondering soul, who thus by faith beholds his Saviour in smiles, as if the sun at midnight, in mid-heavens, and in a moment, had burst upon his view. We "are kept by the power of God through faith." What strength is in this twofold chain of faith and power! It is the peace of reconciliation, however, that draws the charming bond still closer, yes, and closer still, in our union with Christ, till we are truly one with him as he is one with the Father.

From these reflections we perceive the range of this incomparable peace. It rules by its universality. It has reference to all things, and draws continual supplies from all; all of scenery, of society, and of the world's past, or passing, or prospective history. What gives the crowning interest (we repeat the mighty truth) to all these collectively, or to any the minutest particle of the great mass, is the predominant idea, the secret charm of the conviction,—that we are now at peace with God. This peace is, therefore, not a single sentiment, but the essence, the concentrated sweetness, the radiancy of all other sentiments; or, rather, it dilates and elevates itself to the extent of the knowledge we possess of God, of his records, of his plans and purposes, and of the worlds which he has made and governs. Such are its dimensions; and such, therefore, the breadth and scope of its impressiveness and power upon the heart.

It rules by its perpetuity. It is not an individual and transient act or passion, but a calm and settled state of the mind; and the constancy of its operation, though often silent and unnoticed, like the dew of the morning, cannot fail in course of time to produce the most important habits, and other valuable consequences. Unlike the loveliness of a song, and the passing of a bird through the air, it leaves its track behind, and still continues to print fresh power upon the heart. Both by sap and by assault, it steadily brings on the total ruin of the kingdom of unrighteousness; which ruin is indispensably necessary to the full establishment of the kingdom of true peace in the mind.

This peace gives evidence of its power in its effects, not merely on the conscience, its proper seat and throne, but in the sanctity and serenity which it diffuses over the imagination,

the thoughts, the passions, and every single faculty of the soul. In particular, it gives the understanding an experimental proof of the truth of Christianity, and leads it to form its estimate of all things which make any pretensions to advance our happiness, according to their agreement or disagreement with this peace. It disposes the mind to dwell on the most pleasant aspect of objects, and instinctively to seize on whatever circumstances tend to improve our own happy temper, and that of those around us. Its influence in aiding us to soften the asperities, and conciliate the differences, of those who are contentious, is sometimes truly marvellous: The softness of its words has turned away the storms of wrathful passion with a power almost miraculous. It also constrains the joyful believer to use his best endeavours that all mankind, especially those whom he most dearly loves, might be put in possession of so rich a treasure. Its tendency to holiness is very strong. The more it is cultivated, the more our faith and love, and every other grace, are strengthened. It draws us nearer to Christ from whom it came, and who is the great fountain of the spiritual life in general. The deceitful peace of this world leads to sloth and vice; but peace with God is always truly tested by the promptness with which it carries out the mind to all holy obedience. And the peace itself increases by this means. As clouds supplied from the sea, and carried by prevailing winds, break in torrents on the mountains, and returning by the vales fall again into the ocean, to feed the source from which they came; so peace and purity are mutually dependent on each other. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace: And the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." "He will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly;" or, as the words have been read, "that they may not turn again to folly." "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love;" that is, as some translate the text, "I drew them with the cables of a man, with the thick-twisted ropes of love." By these, which are proper to the nature of man, and not with the chains of an unreasonable and senseless beast, does he draw us along, as the word means, in the high way of holiness. And these thick-twisted ropes are by learned men interpreted to signify a sense and assurance of the pardoning love of God.

AN

ESSAY ON TASTE,

IN ITS

CONNEXION WITH RELIGION AND MORALITY.

"What then is Taste, but these internal powers
Active, and strong, and feelingly alive
To each fine impulse? a discerning sense
Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
From things deform'd, or disarranged, or gross
In species? This nor gems, nor stores of gold,
Nor purple state, nor culture can bestow;
But God alone when first his active hand
Imprints the secret bias to the soul."

AKENSIDE.

AN ESSAY,

&c.

Among the numerous improvements of the age, the high and increasing estimate which is formed of the powers and pursuits of taste, is most obvious. If the taste itself, displayed by the public, were equally progressive, we might, perhaps, bid fair to rival, at some distant day, the boasted refinements of antiquity. Still, we have no reason to be seriously discouraged. The ardour for perfection must precede its attainment, and each successive degree of excellence will light up the path to that which is complete. Should no shade of ignorance, no public impolicy or immorality, obstruct this career, it must continue to be prosecuted till it issue in all possible success. There may be occasional instances of striking deficiency and extravagance, but even these will serve as correctives. The stream will run itself into a course of settled purity and regularity.

Whatever, therefore, tends to cherish or to elevate and direct this fine faculty of the youthful mind; whatever shall familiarize the student with the features and spirit both of beauty and of grandeur, as seen in nature, and in the similar creations of the artist, in the cultivated writings of ingenious men, and more especially in human character; must be valued by all who appreciate the charms, as well as the more solid advantages, of civilized society. The mind will thus, by means of its impressive associations, supposing these to be rightly improved, assimilate itself to a higher portion of the beauty and loftiness, of which, as mind, it is susceptible.

It is extremely important to observe, though very apparent, that taste is merely an instrument of the moral principle, and not, strictly speaking, any part of the principle itself; enters not into the essence of the will or conscience; and ranks, in this respect, with genius and the passions, with the physical organs, with wealth, and with all that is subject to the government of

the mind. Taste, indeed, is sensitive and correct, not merely from an aptitude in the mental constitution, and from habit, but also from the co-operation of the judgment, which is as requisite to cultivate and guide the faculty in this as in any other case of instinctive sensibility. The judgment, however, while thus most accurately employed in forming taste to a correctness which might seem to preclude the necessity of appealing to reflection, may be very improperly conducted in a moral point of light.

Thus taste, as a simple habit, may be a matter of indifference: Used in connexion with good and grand designs, it may be a virtue; directed to improper ends, a dangerous and destructive vice. Nor ought we ever to forget, that, for the application of this charming gift, we must finally account to the Divine Giver, as well as for that of all his other rich and undeserved communications.

It may, perhaps, be supposed, that the subjects about which this faculty is conversant have not, after all, a very obvious connexion with the moral character; and that the artist, for instance, must find the virtuous property of his operations in the industrious habits with which they are prosecuted as the means of his subsistence. But those subjects are numerous and impressive, and ever present to the man of taste, and, therefore, constantly exerting some important influence over him. They touch him with a sense of novelty, grandeur, sublimity, beauty, originality, ridicule, and imitation. Some of these are seen in the inanimate works of nature and of art; as in landscape and architecture. And even here the attentive student may read instruction in the analogy between these and the moral world, which often strikes us with a correspondent sense of what is regular and noble.

Besides, other things being equal, there results from the fashioning and harmonizing spirit of these lower instances, as already hinted, a sort of predisposition, or happy element of the mind, by which it is somewhat prepared to exemplify this analogy in the assumption of mental beauty and grandeur. And, what is at once a happy and striking co-incidence, the highest department of cultivated taste has for its principal subject what, in this respect, is the highest in importance,—we refer to human character,—while persons of less elevated taste are chiefly interested in scenery, painting, and architecture, which may be richly enjoyed before the mind has attained the amplitude and percep-

tion necessary to appreciate the structure of an epic poem, or the attributes of its hero. A man of the highest taste will naturally look for his favourite studies in the several walks of life and the writings of eminent men, while a painter eminent in his art may have little or no discernment of the beauties of history and poetry. Agreeably to this scale of ascension, it is observable, that those who love sublimity in nature love it also in heroic character, while those who are partial to sensible beauty are chiefly charmed with its parallel in the virtues of domestic life.

Another fundamental position is this,—that where the power of religion has not yet been felt, no influence of taste can give it an existence; and that, on the other hand, he who is not, in the usual sense, a man of taste will not be rendered such by the power of religion. It can merely be said, that, when they both concur in the same individual, their reciprocal operations is of no small importance to the interests of either. Taste, where piety presides, may farther assist us to receive some peculiar religious improvement from the aspects of nature, from the workings of our own minds, and from a careful and delighted perusal of the Scriptures.

But before we expressly notice some advantages resulting to the virtues from the proper use of taste, let us briefly mention certain circumstances which may be thought unfavourable to its influence on the moral character. Strictly speaking,—in a view of things which includes the whole of their relations and final consequences,—the same subject cannot possess both advantages and disadvantages. The truth and consistency of the universe demand this. For instance: Vice has no advantages, nor can virtue be coupled with a single case of absolute and real loss. Still, in a limited view, the distinction is well-founded, and serves to mark out with perspicuity the nature and relations of the subject to which they may refer.

The disadvantages, however, connected with taste may be chiefly referred to the character of the individual, and not to taste itself. For example: An exquisite sense of beauty implies a corresponding disrelish of the contrary. Now, the man who shall possess this delicacy, without a corrective portion of good sense and of piety, will be in danger of taking serious offence at the intrinsic truth of God, because of the plainness and roughness with which it is sometimes handled in the pulpit, and in the writings of very able divines. He ought not, however, to expect

a charm in every thing. Instruction and redemption are the indispensable substance of religious truth ; ornament is but a part of its dress, and not even the most important part. It is as unreasonable to expect that all should speak and write with taste, as to expect that all should be possessed of great learning, and of a lofty and engaging person. A misdirected taste may produce a habit of undue gratification, little consonant to the mortified state of the feelings which Christianity enjoins. Besides, a sound taste will naturally select for its enjoyment the beauties of a subject, and revolt from an invidious examination of defects. Thus at Rome it is observed, that young artists of the worst taste, when introduced for the first time to the works of the great masters, coolly commence with the detection of faults ; while others, on the contrary, are lost at once in admiration of their excellencies, and afterwards reluctantly make mention of defects. Generosity and discretion both suggest, that we ought to copy the latter in every instance of tasteful observation, but especially in singling out the charms connected with truth, and with human character.

One disadvantage connected with taste is the strong temptation to pursue its pleasures to excess. This, indeed, may be observed of every species of enjoyment, but particularly of that which is the subject of our present inquiry, because it is unaccompanied with any deterring pains and exertions. Besides, this too frequent passive state of the mind is very injurious to the moral feelings, as well as to the intellectual faculties. There is no activity excited to strengthen either the one or the other. Thus an excessive thirst for the pleasures of taste in the unceasing perusal of poetry and romances occasions effeminacy, and often the reverse, indeed, of its own object,—dissatisfaction and disgust.

The man of taste ought, therefore, to combine as much of intellectual thinking, religious intention, and virtuous action, and masculine exertion with his favourite pursuit, as the case may allow. He ought, however, to be cautious lest he sink the substance of things in an undue regard for the drapery which adorns them. The strength of a pillar is indispensable: Not so its florid capital. There is a luxury and sumptuousness in literature which ought to be repressed on the score, too, of national prosperity. When every man must emulously have, if possible, his own extensive and expensive palace, and gallery

of pictures, and museum; instead of forming and gratifying his taste chiefly by visits to grand public institutions of the kind, and living a private life of temperance in this respect, as was the manner of the ancients; a state of society must ensue highly unfavourable to the virtue and happiness of a people.

The greatest evil, probably, connected with taste is the monstrous alliance which, in too many instances, it forms with vice and indecency. Good sense, apart from Christian principle, will even disapprove of its application to the idle trifles so frequently employed as the medium of exhibiting its triumphs; as when all the genius of the painter and engraver is furnished to embellish the last pinch of a snuff-taker. It might seem, that history, including the nobler and more instructive displays of human character, and nature in all her aspects of beauty and of grandeur, were at length exhausted, and nothing new remained for the artist, but to lavish all his taste and talent on the refuse of subjects.

All this is foolish enough; but that every species of literary elegance should be employed to give seasoning to the garbage of unhallowed principles and passions, in songs and tales, and poems and pictures, not always marked, indeed, by the impudence of broad obscenity, (as the time for this is now happily passed away,) but chiefly by a veiled licentiousness—a soft strain of impurity—the more pernicious in its tendency because of its insidiousness, is greatly to be blamed and lamented. This shows, what is hinted above, that no necessary connexion exists between virtue and taste. Though bad morals have the tendency to injure taste, still there are exceptions which merely seem to indicate the contrary, as some persons of an exquisite taste have been known to sink into the depths of sensual passions and pursuits. We therefore deem the doctrine quite unfounded which asserts, that a man of high talents, like the late Lord Byron, must, because of his transcendent gifts, be a man of sound moral principle; that nature could not commit the discrepancy of giving existence to so fine a mind without supplying it with a corresponding character of virtue, as well as capacity for it. This must be meant, we presume, to vindicate the conduct of the noble poet; otherwise it means nothing. But should we even admit, that he possessed the most exquisite moral sensibility, as well as taste in literature, the consequence alleged above would not necessarily follow; for even this sensibility, as

well as taste, is not the moral principle itself, as it frequently exists where its own dictates are unheeded. It may, indeed, excite the self-reproach, and increase the guilt, of the individual, but can form no apology for his actual delinquencies.

That taste and piety are materially different from each other, is farther shown by the fact, that men of refinement frequently reject the Gospel, in regard to its influence on principle and practice, while they admit its truth, and while it stands presented to their view, in the exquisite eloquence of certain preachers and writers, in all the tasteful charms, indeed, which they themselves are wont to admire. The true reason, then, why such men despise religion, is not the frequent coarseness of its garb. This reason lies deep in the spirit of the contemner himself, in the natural enmity of the human heart to evangelical truth and holiness. Even the virtues do not always hang together in a perfect system; as a man may possess many civil and military virtues, and yet be chargeable with all the beastliness of a drunkard; and all the while he may be truly a man of fine taste.

It is much, however, to be feared, that the important distinction here laid down is frequently forgotten; and that many class the sweet and solemn soothings of the lofty cathedral, when the arches throw their shadows, and the tombs teach their mementos, and the organ is rolling, and the sacred hymn resounding, till all heaven seems to descend into the softened spirit of the bending worshipper;—it is to be feared, we presume, that multitudes identify this natural feeling—which a villain might experience—with the principled excitements of a deep and practical devotion; while Christ, as bleeding for the world, as the ground of a sinner's free justification, is unrecognised; and selfishness, and pride, and passion still retain their secret but determined grasp of the character. Men of taste, possessing little knowledge of the scheme of redemption, whose reading of the Scriptures bears to that of novels and romances the proportion of one to a thousand, are of all others the most likely to droop beneath the wand of this dangerous enchantment. The impressiveness in question may, doubtless, be rendered a profitable auxiliary, directed and influenced by a higher agency, but ought not to be a principal, much less to take the exclusive occupancy of the mind under the assumed denomination of a sincere and sublime piety.

One end designed by beauty is to fix the attention on the subject which it ornaments; to interest the mind in the substantial properties of things. And how the tasteful adornings of unhallowed subjects, by exciting attention, imagination, and sympathy, must tend to vitiate the mind, may be easily conceived. He must be a very virtuous man indeed, who can relish the alliance, and still receive no taint from such indelicate communications.

Among the disadvantages in question, it is no small inconvenience, that "taste," so called, is sometimes nothing but a morbid and perverted sensibility,—a craziness of feeling occasioned by an undue thirst for the pleasures, to the manifest neglect of the improvement, of the mind. And this thirst becomes still farther aggravated and diseased by the baleful sources which are sought to quench it. It is fashionable to set up for a man of taste,—a tempting circumstance to ignorant pretenders; and should they be men of sanguine disposition, and of little penetration and judgment, they are tiresome to excess, eternally collecting trash and trumpeting its praises. Matters of taste are the most convenient medium in the world for the vain and the ignorant to obtrude themselves on others, because they need not give a reason, as tastes are said to be various.

There is no foundation for the prejudice against taste, arising from the circumstance, that artists have frequently been men of weak minds and of wicked hearts. The governing power of the soul, we must repeat, enthroned by religion, will give a certain strength and general improvement to the man, in the absence of all taste and learning; while, on the other hand, the mind which refuses to be ruled by any steady principles of sense and morality may, from selfishness or humour, rise to eminence in some single faculty or art.

It is not from a defect in the nature of taste, but from the want of education, and of a sound moral influence, that the persons here referred to are so wanting in piety and prudence. It is unreasonable to expect, that taste should do every thing, and even achieve, as by miracle, what higher and more powerful principles have failed to accomplish. If men will not preserve the balance of their minds by a parallel improvement of their several powers and faculties, there must be weakness somewhere, notwithstanding all their labours and success in some limited department. Let a man confine himself to a single class of

objects in any certain line of study, and he will soon annihilate the power to follow any other class, even in that particular line. Dugald Stewart has shown by facts, that men may become expert reasoners, with regard to a particular kind of objects and ideas, without any general improvement of the faculty of reasoning; and the observation will apply with equal force to taste, and also to the moral principle, when viewed in its manifest defects as a principle of mere nature, and uninfluenced by the power of religion. If, then, we should neglect the cultivation of any one faculty of intellect, or of morals, the capacity, in this particular case, must be expected to vanish almost completely from the character. We may say of taste, as of any other power of the mind, "A wide range will strengthen it; restriction will weaken it, will enfeeble it, in regard to its general scope, though all the while it may be strengthened for its favourite application."

But there are persons on whom no defence, or favourable view, of taste will have the least impression; who despise it as a foolish weakness, if not a culpable abuse of things. They cannot condescend to subjects so inferior; but move in the higher sphere of philosophy, and a precise logic, and something which bears the marks of direct and naked usefulness. As to the finer lines and charms of human character, a man of this description has no eye to discover them; perchance he may approve the strong facts of its righteousness. If he sympathize at all, it is with some brother-patron of all ruggedness, from whom he receives a ghastly smile of approbation of his own boasted bluntness. These, forsooth, are honest men, who love plainness, and speak their minds most freely, and care no more for courtesy, and the beautiful touches of a refined charity, and modesty, and propriety, than for the buttercups and daisies which wither in the hands of a child.

Such persons seem not to reflect, that beauty is a boon from God,—the finishing, at least, which he has given to every part of his workmanship, and certainly deserves our contemplation and acknowledgment. They forget, that, as the man who studies nature in her causes, operations, and designs, forms his understanding on the model of the eternal reason; so he who enters with a grateful zest into the contemplation of her beauties and sublimities, forms his taste on the actual conceptions of the Deity, and, so far, advances in the intellectual image of his Maker. They seem to forget, that because mankind are greatly

swayed by beauty, (whether wisely or not is here immaterial,) it may possibly be rendered serviceable as a means of conducting them to the Source from whence it came.

Creation, with its immensity of matter and of mind, is as much the product of almighty power and goodness as the Bible itself; and we cannot help believing, that the willing abandonment of the studies connected with taste is little less than a sort of undesigned impeachment of the infinite Artist who has lavished so much of charm and of splendour on the works of his hands,—works which, on the principles of the persons referred to, might have answered all essential purposes, without one sparkle of the loveliness with which they are adorned. It is true, the engaging aspects and affecting touches of nature are not equally important with her causes and uses, much less are they of equal moment with the wonders of redemption; but why despise the moon and stars, with their appropriate beauties and advantages, because they bear no comparison with those of the sun?

The influence of taste in modifying the moral and religious principle may be conceived from its intimate connexion with every other power of the mind, or state of the heart; and from the strength which it exerts in the calm, but constant, pursuit of its designs, operating with the undisturbed and imperceptible procedure of an under-current as broad and as rapid as the surface which conceals it. Taste is a high sense of beauty, in all its kinds and aspects, and may be the medium of a powerful attraction. Besides, it implies a corresponding aversion to objects in which the absence of beauty, or the violation of its principles, is manifest. And how, in both these views, the passions and pursuits of men may be influenced, requires no very elaborate description or proof.

What a multitude of delightful contemplations and emotions concur in a single instance of tasteful enjoyment! Let that instance be a park or landscape. The forms and colours possess an intrinsic beauty, independent of every other consideration,—a charm that strikes the inward sense with a lively but inexplicable pleasure. For, by the way, we may observe, that the usual theories of association account only for a part of the pleasure of which material beauty is an occasional cause. Thus music, as a composition, may be clearly explained, while the question, why single notes delight the ear, puts to silence the

inquiry. If spring be the season, novelty supplies an additional charm to the whole; for, the summer-green, though equally fresh and vivid, is not equally interesting with that of spring, simply because it is not possessed of novelty. Should this have been the scene of our youthful days and friendships, now seen after an absence of many years; should it present such natural features, and buildings, and statues as lead the imagination back to classical antiquity; should it stand connected with some striking portions of our own national history or literature; or should we recognise, in the woods, and streams, and in the colours of the sky, a perfect semblance of the finest landscape-painting which we have been used to admire; association, it is evident, would greatly swell the tide of pleasure. Other details might be added; but these will serve to show how the impression may be heightened, according to the number, and quality, and harmony of the principles which the case may chance to include. And what a concentration of attractives may thus impress and sway the heart, and, through this medium, the reason and moral feelings of the individual!

Thus, the man of taste possesses more of enjoyment than any other person. He has not only a peculiar perception of the most obvious and common charms, he also discovers an infinity of finer beauties which escape the notice of mankind in general. And should his taste be highly cultivated, he enjoys the pleasures of a critical understanding, which marks the reasons of the case, in addition to those of a delighted sensibility. And should this taste at the same time introduce the mind—which not unfrequently occurs—to noble trains of imaginative thinking, to sympathetic emotions, and to moral contemplations and excitements, a banquet must be provided for the happy favourite the most rich and enviable, and which—still presuming that his heart is virtuous—can scarcely fail to throw the whole soul into an element and attitude the most favourable to the best unfoldings of the moral character. The inanity and sluggishness of a grosser state are gone, and the free spirit is prepared to run its career of moral excellence with renovated vigour.

The pleasure itself thus enjoyed, apart from its tendencies, has, in its own nature,—should no reason appear against it,—a reason in its favour, since pleasure is, no doubt, a principal end of our existence. Bishop Berkeley must have been one of the happiest as well as richest of men, when he regarded all the fine

seats which he visited as his own. "The same," he says, "I think of the groves where I walk. In a word, all that I desire is the use of things, let who will have the keeping of them." The same may be said of company, and reading, and all the innumerable sources of tasteful enjoyment with which our life is enriched. To renounce all this, without a reason, is like fancying that some meritorious penance lies simply in the choice of pain in preference to pleasure,—in leaving the level pathway to church, for the difficult and offensive mire.

The connexion, also, of taste with displays of human character is obvious and most important. If material objects derive their beauty, in some degree, from their association and analogy with mind, then mind itself must be still more beautiful. On this subject the poets are peculiarly competent to judge; and their chief care, when the art is properly employed, is to excite admiration, as well as sympathy, by the loftiest and grandest exhibitions of virtue. Besides: Their own delicate sense of this kind of excellence is often warmly expressed:—

> "Is aught so fair
> In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
> In the bright eye of Hesper, or the morn,
> In nature's finest forms,—is aught so fair
> As virtuous friendship? as the candid blush
> Of him who strives with fortune to be just?
> The graceful tear that streams for others' woes?
> Or the mild majesty of private life,
> Where peace with ever-blooming olive crowns
> The gate? where Honour's liberal hands effuse
> Unenvied treasures, and the snowy wings
> Of innocence and love protect the scene?"

The same doctrine appears to be recognised by St. Paul, when he represents the modesty, sobriety, and good works of the woman under the notion of her ornaments, and, when speaking of the virtues, he employs the terms "whatsoever things are lovely." And partly for this very reason the virtues are called "graces." The man of taste must, therefore, possess a great advantage in the contemplation of either good or bad character. He can enter more fully into the spirit of his subject, at least as regards its beauty or deformity, and may, therefore, be expected—other circumstances being equal, as aforesaid—to admire and love the virtues, and to hate all vice as odious and disgusting, in a degree corresponding with his better light and feeling. He will enjoy

the living picture of beneficence, and be himself the more beneficent; the beauty of a grateful character will touch his sensibility, and dispose him to be grateful. And, delighted with the view of virtuous conduct in others, he will be led, from a sense of interest, to exercise a Christian love and charity for all men. Thus the virtues he contemplates will be reflected by himself, with the added grace of his own tasteful accomplishments, as the foliage on the banks of a river seem softened in the shining stream. That is to say,—for we must never forget it,—that where Christianity has previously impressed its superhuman principles upon the heart, taste will thus be found an admirable means of religious improvement, just as a critical acquaintance with the Scriptures may be turned to spiritual advantage in the experience of the man who, independent of this knowledge, is possessed of a spiritual disposition.

AN ESSAY

ON

THE INFLUENCE OF GOD

IN THE

GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.*

* This Essay, which is presented in an imperfect and unfinished state, appears to have been intended as an introduction to that "on Inspiration" which follows, and which will be found more complete in its form, and richer in its matter.

" Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life; extends through all extent;
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns."

Pope.

AN ESSAY,

&c.

We are so accustomed to converse with objects of sense, that our attention to the nature and operations of the mind, is, considering the importance which belongs to the subject, greatly disproportionate. It is only when some extraordinary event, or great and unusual effect of human exertion, excites our wonder, and, consequently, our inquiry, that we refer, for the moment, to the cause of the phenomenon. Is it, then, surprising, that men are ignorant, in a high degree, of the springs by which they are actuated? Thus outward things must be acknowledged to be very powerful hinderances, both to the philosophy of mind, and the religion of the heart.

We must be still more duly sensible of the truth and force of these remarks, when we reflect, that even external objects are seldom recognised as causes which affect us. It is the just observation of a living and profound writer, that "the constant and uniform impressions which such objects make upon the senses render us, in a great measure, unconscious of their influence. Their effects are, however," he observes, "not inconsiderable, though they are produced imperceptibly to us. To all those accustomed to trace effects up to their causes, and to perceive and appreciate the extensive influence of causes, in common opinion, of little weight, this assertion cannot appear paradoxical. Indeed, causes, to our observation, of little or no importance, produce the greatest and most extensive effect; and an inaptitude or inability to appreciate their due influence tends considerably to pervert and falsify many opinions to us of the utmost moment." * What, then, must be the deficiency of

* Dr. Cowan, "*Anthropaideia*; or, A Tractate on General Education," vol. i. p. 188.

thoughtless and worldly men, in the knowledge of the first great Cause, on which all other causes absolutely depend? While that enmity against God continues, which, in human nature, as such, most evidently does exist, even the more direct and powerful operations of God himself upon the mind (supposing, at present, the truth of such an influence) will be strongly counteracted, and its meaning left unsearched. Accordingly, men do "pervert and falsify," on the subject of Divine influence, opinions that are truly of the "utmost moment."

To a mind which education has not perverted, and which vice has not depraved, nothing can appear so rash and dangerous, so absurd and uncomfortable, as the doctrine which excludes the Almighty Father from the immediate and proper government of his kingdom and family, and which so confines the operations of the universe to the influence of causes interwoven with its nature and essence, as to render any Divine interposition whatever unnecessary and incompatible with the honour and attributes of God. On the contrary, can any scheme be more consistent with the infinite wisdom and goodness of the Almighty Sovereign, or more enrapturing to the view of a reasonable being, than that which governs the world, both by grand and comprehensive laws, inherent in their subjects, and by particular wills occasionally impinging these natural causes, as to infinite wisdom and love may seem expedient? It is thus that, while eternal Justice, as if by storms, confounds a guilty world, infinite Love, like the sun, breaks through the clouds, and, by his energy, renews the troubled elements to peace and beauty. In this truly admirable manner does the Lord of all things maintain eternal order, advance the best interests of his peculiar children, and

"From seeming evil still educing good,"

work effects which it would be as unphilosophical as impious to ascribe to the most elegant and powerful arrangement of created things.

Though the influence of the Holy Spirit is confessed to be often undistinguishable from the proper energy of our own minds, it does not follow that all inquiry concerning it should be proscribed, or that it would be really useless to investigate its operation. This influence must not be ranked among those qualities or powers which are justly termed "occult," and of

which, because their supposed effects are so circumstanced, and of such rare occurrence, nothing can be known with certainty. The facts in which the Holy Spirit, as in himself a cause distinct from every other, is presumed to be the principal agent, are numerous, and obvious to the search of all; and the texts of Scripture which assert or imply the doctrine in question are so abundant, and so clearly expressed, as to afford sufficient data for conclusions the most important, both in regard to faith and practice. Consequently, all who are interested in this doctrine cannot be too frequently or too forcibly excited to examine, as far as possible, its reasons and foundations. And, till this is done, no peremptory decision should be advanced on the subject. If it be proposed, as involved in the doctrine, that to destroy the works of the devil, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, and, in one word, to apply the whole benefit of the Gospel, is the office of a Divine Agent, (which, it is hoped, will be made to appear, in this attempt,) then shall we be inexcusable, if we neglect the inquiry, or proceed in it with an attention either uncandid or unfixed.

To speculate on a subject of this description, though an exercise the most delightful to a thinking mind, is, notwithstanding, a point of comparative insignificance. The subject, in its grand results, is, to the individual, one of a nature the most deeply interesting. Whether these results are, with the most serious attention, considered separately and more minutely, or in the whole compass of their aggregate importance, as reaching to every possible point of real moment to his happiness, throughout the full period of his mortal and immortal existence, the subject will be found to excite and to justify the most ardent investigation. What are all the treasures of the world, compared with the true fellowship of the eternal Father and of his Son Jesus Christ;—compared with the life and image of God in the soul of man, and with the glorious majesty of his heavenly kingdom? which privileges, we presume, are all conveyed to us by a means incomparably fitted to produce the effects assigned to it,—a means no less than that of His real presence, operating with an energy peculiar to the Supreme Agent, on the subjects of his favour.

To preachers of the Gospel, few subjects must be compared, in magnitude and interest, with that of which we now speak. The circumstance, that this doctrine, however it may be under-

stood, is a frequent and striking topic of the inspired writers, is of itself sufficient to call forth their most serious and attentive research. But when the question is confessedly of such vital moment, as to involve the eternal happiness or damnation of the human race, the sacred minister is doubly bound to appreciate and pursue the inquiry. He must feel, besides the necessity of salvation for himself, that he is a guardian and dispenser of all such doctrines as are essential to the everlasting welfare of those to whom he preaches.

Of the subject before us, one important branch is, that portion of Divine assistance which is believed to be peculiarly the privilege of public teachers in the church of God, for enabling them rightly to divide the word of truth. Now, if preaching be a work more immediately directed and influenced by God himself, it follows, that some very important errors, and dangerous consequences, will arise from the contrary supposition; a sufficient reason to induce us to pay particular attention to this part of the subject. There are, however, those who boldly and unequivocally deny the truth of this Divine co-operation. The present is, indeed, an age that pretends to high improvements in reason and every department of knowledge: It is, notwithstanding, to be feared, that, with all our boasted light, and apparent force and justness of conception, we are remarkably deficient in submitting to the grand energies of the Christian faith, as an inspired revelation; and, consequently, the defence of Christianity, as a system still divinely communicated in the preaching of the Gospel, is a great and imperious duty. There are also those who, though they believe in the doctrine of Divine assistance, as proper for the ministry, yet view the subject through a very vague and indistinct medium. If such is our condition, what pity that we should not be frequently stirred up, by one means or another, to seek to be emancipated from so painful an uncertainty! Then should we know, in this respect, how to pray, and for what to pray. To such, at least, as are deeply convinced of the necessity of a Divine assistance, to be combined with human art, in the great work of preaching, the question will appear important. What ought we to understand by Divine influence, as afforded to ministers, for their assistance in preaching, and how far, in this particular duty, may the operation of such influence, and that of human talent, be considered as extending?

We shall, therefore, proceed to inquire, in the first place, whether any such cause or influence exists in the mind of man, as may be properly termed "Divine," and distinct from all created causes. Of this we must be fully convinced before we can be encouraged to commence, or prepared by resolution and warmth of interest to continue, an examination into the nature and principles of Divine influence, which will be our next point of inquiry. Here we shall be naturally led to advance to another branch of the subject, universally momentous, which will be, the application of those principles to the great purposes more immediately intended by a Divine influence on the mind. The regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit will, consequently, call for our particular attention. And as the assistance of the same Spirit in the preaching of the Gospel, though a topic of observation not uncommon in the church of Christ, and one, as we have seen, of the greatest importance, has not been adequately touched by Christian writers of the present day, we shall endeavour to discuss it in a just and proper light. Devout and practical observations and reflections will, of course, as we proceed, present themselves to our notice. The holy Scriptures, right reason, the experience of true Christians, and the common sense of mankind, under the supplicated influence and direction of that good Spirit of which we speak, it is hoped, will be our guides, in the present effort, to truth and happiness.

I. OBVIOUSNESS OF THE ARGUMENT.

To a person who fully believes the doctrine in question, it is matter of astonishment that any one should ever have had the courage to deny it; and more especially, that multitudes who call themselves "Christians" should be its most redoubted enemies. This, however, is not the most astonishing thing in the history of human opinions. Not only the existence both of matter and of spirit has been confidently denied, by the different opponents of these subjects, but even the being of a God, though a point of all others the most strictly demonstrable, has been rejected, by some minds, apparently of considerable strength and comprehension. The native pride of the human heart, a prejudice occasioned by the authority of names and systems; and the destructive effects, with regard both to the judgment and heart, of avaricious and libertine pursuits, perhaps, can alone account for such facts.

What Dr. Paley has remarked, in reference to another subject, may be said with respect to a denial of the influences of the Spirit: "Were it necessary to inquire into the motives of men's opinions, (I mean, their motives separate from their arguments,) I should almost suspect, that, because the proof of a Deity, drawn from the constitution of nature, is not only popular, but vulgar; (which may arise from the cogency of the proof, and be, indeed, its highest recommendation;) and because it is a species almost of puerility, to take up with it; for these reasons, minds which are habitually in search of invention and originality feel a resistless inclination to strike off into other solutions, and other expositions. The truth is, that many minds are not so indisposed to any thing which can be offered to them, as they are to the flatness of being content with common reasons: And, what is most to be lamented, minds conscious of superiority are the most liable to this repugnancy." * The common reasons for a Divine influence on the mind have been urged for ages, and are still urged by men of sense and experience; from which it appears, they have not yet been overturned: And as the subject is not a physical but a religious one, and of great importance to religion and morality, we may expect, that time, instead of proving them to be false, will only serve to confirm the common opinion. To such reasons we appeal, and on them we take our chief stand.

He who seriously considers the importance of Divine influence cannot fail to be zealous in its defence, and in the warmth of his enjoyment of so favourite a doctrine: He conceives, perhaps, that he could speedily convince the whole world of its truth and importance. But though expectations of this kind are often disappointed, it still becomes the friends of truth to support, as far as possible, what, in their opinion, is infinitely worthy of their utmost attention.

II. THE SUBJECT DEFINED.

The point of our inquiry is an important branch of the subject of Providence. The government of the world, by the power of God supporting its established order, and conducting its various operations, either purely in that order, or, also, by adventitious movements, so as to effect the designs of his

* "Natural Theology," chap. xxiii.

wisdom and goodness, is what we mean by "Providence." Consequently, Divine influence on the mind is a most important agent in Providence. Indeed, if any special or extraordinary movement can be shown to take place in the grand operations of the providential scheme, such movement will necessarily involve a Divine influence on the human mind. For man is a chief instrument in the conduct of the plan. His happiness is one of its most important final causes. And as matter was clearly made for the sake of mind, and stands in the closest connexion with it, we may conclude, that whatever changes may be effected by the secret energy of God on the material world, the mind of man cannot fail to be impressed by them, in some way more or less important. Again: If it should at all appear, that the Supreme Being moves upon the visible creation, it will be obvious to infer, that he also governs moral agents, who, from their nature and rank in the whole of things, may be supposed particularly to require his influence and direction.

It may be proper here to deduce the discriminating notion of that Divine influence which is the subject of our observations.

The universe is evidently in a state of perpetual change and motion. Such, notwithstanding the varieties of this agitation, is the order still preserved throughout the whole, that the distinctions so observable among the different classes of phenomena, and the uniformity so striking in each particular class, are said to proceed from laws, which, though imperceptible in themselves, are yet conceived to possess the power of causation. The opinions which prevail on this subject may be just mentioned in a general division:—First, those which attribute the continued order of the universe to hidden causes, as distinct from the energy which is purely Divine, as the effects which they are supposed to regulate are distinct from the Divine essence; and, in the next place, such as exhibit an opposite opinion, which supposes the order of the universe to be not only at first established, but every moment maintained, by the incessant agency of one Supreme Mind.

Now, whether we adopt any one of the several theories advanced, in regard to the former class of opinions, or fix our full assent on the last view of the subject; in either case, if we believe the doctrine of Divine influence, the conclusion will be the same, with respect to the proper notion of such influence; namely, that it involves an interference with the common order

of created things. In consistency with the opinion of created innate causes, it will signify "an impingement of those causes by the immediate power of God;" and, according to the doctrine of one supreme and only Cause, it will imply a suspension, or new direction, or additional intensity of that Cause, in particular instances, connected with the conduct of the general scheme.

"The mental world is also governed according to certain laws, or modes and degrees of power, by which it is affected. Of this we are assured, from experience and observation, though our knowledge of mind is much less certain, much less improved, than that of other subjects of science and inquiry. The soul of man must, equally with matter, be dependent upon God for its existence and essence. Let that dependence be removed, and the soul must cease to be. As long as the primary Cause continues, the effect will remain. But this cause is not the Divine Being, simply considered; otherwise, the effect would, like him, have been eternal. The ultimate support of the human mind is the power of God in operation; and this energy must flow in some specific mode, for the continuance of the mind, a being specifically distinct from others; just as the same almighty Power, operating in a different and equally inexplicable manner, constantly exhibits to us the forms of matter,—another distinct being. What, therefore, has been said of extraordinary impressions made on bodies, or their principles, may be observed of the substance termed "mind," provided moral liberty is maintained inviolate, and the subject thus at liberty is always dealt with according to justice."*

Thus, both as it regards mind and body, whatever be the peculiar nature, degrees, objects, or effects of this influence, it constantly implies an operation of the Almighty Ruler, combined with the common order or process of the particular subject, or subjects, about which it is concerned. So long as the world should continue, secular events would, doubtless, follow one another, as cause and effect, without a special interference, though, probably, such events would, in time, be destructive of society itself; and still, in a certain sense, events do follow one another in this natural manner; but even here the various parts, like the several instruments in a mechanical structure, are

* Dugald Stewart.

arranged, and set in motion, by the Supreme Director of all things, for the production of their subordinate and principal effects.

Now the chief question is not, whether God has power to exert this superadded influence? for he that could create could, if he pleased, abridge, or enlarge, or change, and improve his creation, whether mental or material, to any conceivable extent. Nor does it propose to inquire, whether such influence would be consistent with the attributes of God, and would at the same time be productive of good to his creatures? On these points many feasible remarks might be advanced, without approaching to proof, because founded in theory. But the question is, whether we have satisfactory evidence to believe that such an influence does exist? The above particulars will then be necessary conclusions, which, briefly illustrated, as occasion may offer, will complete our view of this part of the subject.

III. PROOF FROM THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

The attributes of wisdom and goodness, which belong to the Deity in an infinite degree, seem to afford sufficient ground for a belief in the doctrine of particular providence, and of the power called "grace." That the plan of the universe, and the total conduct of that plan, are infinitely worthy of its Divine Author, most evidently follows from the attributes just mentioned. What, then, may appear to us as objectionable parts are only lower links of the mighty and indissoluble chain. To remark, therefore, and object, that God would not have made a system, apparently formed to produce its effects, by means of a certain common and discoverable order, and not rendered it sufficient of itself, (that is, without the help of his extraordinary power,) to answer all desirable purposes, is as unreasonable as to say, He could not consistently have made a race of beings capable of moral evil, and who, because of moral evil, might give occasion that he should show them a revelation of his will, authenticated by supernatural signs and wonders, by prophecies and miracles.

From the wisdom of God it has been argued, that the simplicity of plan which that wisdom would adopt could not fail to render the Divine influence unnecessary. But the simplicity of a theory does not always prove its truth. Complexity, when order and utility are still observed, eminently discover contriv-

ance and design, and these infer the presence of an over-ruling mind. The influence of many opposite laws, both in the material and moral world, seems to show the necessity of constant intelligence and power to preserve the equilibrium. This is strikingly illustrated by different instances in Dr. Paley's "Natural Theology."

Now, the goodness of God, conducted by his wisdom, must include all possible mercy, beneficence, and love. But what wise and loving friend, or benefactor, or parent, would attempt to discharge the whole extent of the office belonging to such a character, by means that should intimate the qualities of that character, in a very inferior way, and accompanied with the least admissible share of his presence and peculiar kindness? This would be impossible, because contradictory to the nature and essence of the qualifications necessary to the just fulfilment of his office. Why, then, should we suppose that Divine wisdom and goodness would proceed on a scale similarly narrow and inconsistent with such perfections?

IV. MAN'S PRESENT CONDITION AS A MORAL AGENT.

The free agency of man may, perhaps, be found to show the necessity of supernatural influence. The Supreme Being is undoubtedly the primary foundation of all causes. But this requires to be viewed distinctively; otherwise, we shall make him the proper author of all evil. The explanation is easy and convincing. He hath been pleased to create intelligent beings with a self-determining power, or liberty of choice and action. In this are eminently shown both his wisdom and goodness. Liberty is a most important part of our intellectual resemblance to the model of all perfection, who is himself an agent the most free. In this liberty is laid the foundation of our moral improvement, by which we are rendered capable of attaining the highest excellence, whether as objects of admiration in our constituted character, or subjects of happiness, because endued with consciousness. Now, though God made and preserves this incomparable gift of liberty, the self-determining power in which it consists renders us the authors of evil. He pre-ordained our being, but not all the modes of which it is susceptible. As, consequently, moral evil originates in the human mind, the faculties of the mind, when self-perverted, must also be evil in proportion to this effect of which it is the cause. And as that

effect is manifestly great, from the nature of it; and diffused through myriads of instances; while, at the same time, instances of an opposite kind, in which the deliberate choice of good in all cases, and power to cultivate that good to the utmost degree, are not to be found; it is reasonable to conclude, that men are not only more inclined to evil than to good, but that they are, through some great commotion of human nature, radically and universally corrupt.

The liberty of the human will involves the greatest imaginable variety and opposition of events. We have reason to believe, that the heart of man may be, and in many cases is, perverted, so as decidedly to choose the most dreadful evils,—the diffusion of human misery, the confounding of all creation, and even the most revengeful hostilities against the person of the Deity. It is also evident, that such elections would be followed up to their extreme consequences, provided incapacity, or the lack of opportunity, or counteracting motives, did not effect a prevention; and, consequently, the most complete disorder would ensue. Now, though communities and individuals are frequently restricted by the means just mentioned, is it to be believed, that such preventives are not over-ruled by a superintending Providence? Are there never any marks of design in their arrangement, as operating together, or otherwise, to cause prevention? As, notwithstanding human depravity, moral evil might, doubtless, be much increased, can the unassisted course of things fully account for the difference? Rather, is it not consistent with reason to believe, that if some mighty and intelligent power did not immediately from himself restrain the human mind, or by disposing natural causes, which, without his disposal, would operate another way, effectually prevent it, men would speedily destroy each other and themselves from the face of the earth?

From what has been said it appears, that God is often, in a more direct manner, the preserver of men; otherwise, the extraordinary deliverances of armies and individuals from the destruction meditated by others, not being attributable to any special cause, cannot be justly the subject of particular admiration and gratitude. It is true, such deliverances are great in themselves, and extremely interesting to the persons who enjoy the advantage of them; but if Divine Providence is utterly excluded, there can be no special will of God, and, therefore, no special kindness. In this view, the most common blessing of

existence is a ground of thanksgiving to God, equally distinguishable with that of a deliverance from the most dreadful calamity. Indeed, let Providence be denied, and the word "deliverance" has no meaning.

It also seems to follow from what has been already said, that all the good which is found in unregenerate men, or appears in their conduct, is done by God himself; and that, in a still more important sense, he forms the Christian character, which all the natural means in the world could never have superinduced on an unconverted mind, or drawn out into improvement, suppose it had existed in natural capacity. The incomparable excellence of Christian holiness is universally acknowledged; and that the Bible ascribes it to God as a work of his operation, is also undisputed. The point at issue is, whether he effects this work purely by the common constitution of our nature, as the subject of sensation, reflection, and passion; or by means of a power absolutely Divine, impressed upon the mind, both immediately and instrumentally, by natural things supernaturally over-ruled. If we admit the first of these two modes of operation, the order in which we are said to derive the blessings of salvation will be completely reversed. Instead of saying, "They come from God," we must assert "They are properly the offspring of man, who makes choice of moral good, and then grasps the glorious prize without the least peculiar assistance from heaven; that he came into the world possessing in himself a germ of the sublimest virtue, which needed nothing to bring it to the greatest perfection, admissible in the present state, but the fostering influence of circumstances altogether natural." In this view of the subject, the common fruits of the field are as much the gifts of God, in regard to the manner in which they are conveyed, as our highest attainments in the moral image of our Maker. But this is contrary to the views which the Holy Scriptures constantly hold out respecting the origin of the Christian life, and to the common sense of mankind; who, throughout the whole of their history appear to have discerned the special hand of God in the more distinguished blessings of a temporal description.

As things are at present, in consequence of the fall of man, the common laws of nature would, in many cases, be insufficient, without the special agency of God, to produce the effect desired, whatever might have been the original adaptation of such laws to their effects. Without this Divine agency, how can we account

for the prosperity or punishment of states, for the spread of the Gospel, for the general regularity of the phenomena of nature, or, in particular, for the protracted existence of human life, which seems to flow from a multitude of causes the most delicate and vulnerable, and of the nicest imaginable dependence on each other?

V. EFFECTS IN THE WORKS OF NATURE ARGUE A SUPERINTENDING AGENCY.

In the natural world there is good reason to believe, that God is still the immediate Governor, as he was at first the Creator, of the whole. It was the just observation of Bishop Berkeley whose great acuteness in metaphysics is universally acknowledged, that "we cannot make even one single step in accounting for the phenomena of nature, without admitting the immediate presence and immediate action of an incorporeal agent, who connects, moves, and disposes all things, according to such rules and for such purposes as seem good to him."* We doubt not that nature acts under the impressions of a powerful Intelligence. How, then, can we account for the usual limits of some of her grandest operations, without adverting to the particular will and efficacy of that Intelligence? Thunder and lightning, hurricanes and earthquakes, are striking instances. Is it without the managing wisdom and power of the Highest, that they have never gone beyond the bounds to which in every case we have found them to extend? and that they have always ceased in a certain manner, and at a certain period of time? Why are they not still more dreadful than any of those which have yet been described? Why have not these terrible evils united in time, place, and violence, so as to destroy a large portion of the globe? Reason joins with piety in the conclusion, that God saith, "Hither shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

For the sake of authority, as well as for acquiring real strength to the argument, I shall give some instances from Dr. Paley, and leave them, with the hope that they will have the same effect upon the mind of the reader, which they produced on the mind of an author so enlightened.

"We may conceive the present face of the earth to have

* Siris, section 237.

originated from the revolution of a sphere, covered by a surface of a compound mixture; the fluid and solid parts separating, as the surface becomes quiescent. Here, then, comes in the moderating hand of the Creator. If the water had exceeded its present proportion, even but by a trifling quantity, compared with the whole globe, all the land would have been covered: Had there been much less than there is, there would not have been enough to fertilize the continent. Had the exsiccation been progressive, such as we may suppose to have been produced by an evaporating heat, how came it to stop at the point at which we see it? Why did it not stop sooner? Why at all? The mandate of the Deity will account for this: Nothing else will."* The same equilibrium, it may be farther observed, is still maintained, and, no doubt, by the self-same moderating hand of God.

"Many of the heavenly bodies, as the sun and fixed stars, are stationary. There rest must be the effect of an absence, or of an equilibrium, of attractions. It proves, also, that a projectile impulse was originally given to some of the heavenly bodies, and not to others. But, farther: If attraction act at all distances, there can only be one quiescent centre of gravity in the universe; and all bodies whatever must be approaching this centre, or revolving round it. According to the first of these suppositions, if the duration of the world had been long enough to allow of it, all its parts, all the great bodies of which it is composed, must have been gathered together in a heap round this point. No changes, however, which have been observed, afford us the smallest reason for believing, that either the one supposition or the other is true; and then it will follow, that attraction itself is controlled or suspended by a superior agent; that there is a power above the highest of the powers of material nature; a will which restrains and circumscribes the operations of the most extensive."†

Dr. Paley has well argued the existence of a God from the striking marks of design and contrivance which appear in numerous portions of the visible creation. A similar mode of reasoning may be found to prove a special Providence. There is this important difference, that, in nature, contrivance proceeds according to invariable laws, in the most orderly and uniform manner,

* "Natural Theology," chap. xxii. † Ibid.

and is in almost every instance easily discernible; whereas, the plan of Providence, together with its purposes, is too profound, too complex, and too extensive, to be readily and clearly comprehended. Events of Providence are intimately connected with the phenomena of nature; but for several reasons they are liable to great irregularities, one event being sometimes the result of many, and re-producing others of a very remarkable variety, while a similar event is found to proceed from a comparatively small number of causes, and is followed by no numerous or important train of consequences. Now, as God conducts his operations chiefly by the regular and ordinary train of causes and effects, there is the fullest evidence, considering the variable nature and wide irregularities of events, that he specially employs both his wisdom and his power in adapting his means to the particular purposes determined in his plan. A certain number of facts in the material world shall be so arranged, and so unite in time and bearing, as to bring about the most important effects in the mental world. This is strikingly seen in the education of different individuals for filling places of particular importance in the state. Intellect is considered to depend in a great degree on animal conformation; nay, that intellect may sometimes be determined, both as to kind and extent, on certain local situations and ocular transactions. Now, to suppose that such arrangements have occurred by chance, or would have taken place precisely in the same manner without the special power of God, and without a particular appointment of his wisdom, would be to depart from the common sense of mankind in judging of affairs. A brief induction of cases will place this subject in the clearest light.

It is worthy of remark, and not even unimportant as a proof on the question, that the notion of a Divine influence has been so obvious, so easily collected, as well from conscience and observation, as from all the books of Scripture, as to be almost universally adopted without demur, and confessed as if by intuition. But more of this in the sequel. Let a plain and candid mind survey the creation, reflect upon events in the history of the world, and study the Holy Scriptures with no particular view besides the discovery of truth; and the reality of a Divine superintendency and influence will be readily and strongly felt; and nothing but the growth of prejudice, the force of temptation, or the magic of sophistry, could induce such a mind to abandon the

doctrine. If this doctrine possess no reality, how, for instance, shall the common people be preserved from deception concerning it? What learning, what penetration, what genius, and what comprehensiveness of thought, must be necessary to prevent the more striking parts of Providence, the workings of the human mind, and the phraseology of Scripture, from establishing a sentiment which is absolutely false, and which is even asserted to be pregnant with mischief?

AN

ESSAY ON INSPIRATION:

BEING

AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,

"HOW FAR MAY PREACHING BE CONSIDERED AS A HUMAN ART, AND HOW FAR, THE EFFECT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OPERATING ON THE MIND OF THE PREACHER? OR WHERE, IN PREACHING, MAY THE WORK OF MAN BE SAID TO END, AND THAT OF THE SPIRIT TO COMMENCE?"

"Nor did the Sire Omnipotent forget
His tender bloom to cherish; nor withheld
Celestial footsteps from his green abode.
Oft from the radiant honours of his throne,
He sent whom most He loved, the sovereign fair,
The goddess from whose inspiration flows
The toil of patriots, the delight of friends;
Without whose work Divine, in heaven or earth,
Nought lovely, nought propitious, comes to pass,
Nor hope, nor praise, nor honour. Her the Sire
Gave it in charge to rear the blooming mind,
The folded powers to open, to direct
The growth luxuriant of his young desires,
To teach him what was good."

AKENSIDE.

AN ESSAY,

&c.

The question presupposes, what need not now be proved at large, that the direct inspiration of the Spirit is, in some respects, necessary to every Christian preacher, not only for assisting him in the actual exercise of his great duty, but for the government of his private studies. This, in any case, would require no tedious and elaborate proof: The nature and importance of the work, and the great unfitness of the ablest instruments considered in themselves, seem sufficient to demonstrate the necessity of such an influence. Indeed, so natural is this opinion, that the very Heathens would never venture to officiate in religious matters without a supposed inspiration from heaven, or a previous initiation by those whom they thought entrusted by the Deity for that purpose. Philosophers have, therefore, been deficient in asserting, that all our ideas, and consequently all the impressions thence arising, are derived by means of sensation and reflection only. They seem to have forgotten, that, from the nature of a Divine influence, and the manner of its application to the human mind, it must be a perfectly distinct and most important source of our ideas. This, however, will be the decided opinion of the true Christian philosopher, and especially of the Christian minister who receives the fulfilment of that Divine promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Dr. Doddridge appears to have stated the different kinds of inspiration with great exactness. It will open the way to some important conclusions on the question before us, briefly to state the substance of his scheme:—

"That is called in general 'an inspiration of superintendency' in which God does so influence and direct the mind of any person, as to keep him more secure from error, in some various and complex discourse, than he would have been merely by the use of his natural faculties. 'Plenary superintendent inspira-

tion' is such a degree of inspiration as excludes any mixture of error at all from the performance so superintended.

"'An inspiration of elevation' is said to take place where the faculties act in a regular and, as it seems, a common manner, yet are raised to an extraordinary degree; so that the composure shall, upon the whole, have more of the true sublime, or pathetic, than natural genius could have given. There may be such an inspiration as this where there is none of superintendency, and much less any that is plenary.

"'Inspiration of suggestion' takes place when the use of the faculties is superseded, and God does, as it were, speak directly to the mind, making such discoveries to it as it could not otherwise have obtained, and dictating the very words in which such discoveries are to be communicated, if they are meant as a message to others. There may be a plenary superintendency where there is neither the inspiration of elevation, nor suggestion."

These views the doctor, in a very judicious manner, applies to the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; but, it is evident, his principles may be usefully applied to other instances of inspiration, particularly that of faithful ministers, in the discharge of their ministry. Did opportunity permit us to investigate this subject fully, it would probably appear, that all these kinds of inspiration, the plenary excepted, are bestowed in different combinations and degrees, on ministers of all descriptions, good and bad, able and inadequate, orthodox and heretic. Let us not be surprised at this remark. Some of the observations which follow will, in a certain degree, show the justice of it.

The different kinds of inspiration which are requisite for the ministry may be applied to the mind of the preacher in two distinct senses: 1. In that general mode of government by which the Almighty checks, or facilitates, or otherwise qualifies the common operations of every human soul: And, 2. In a special and peculiar manner, God the Holy Ghost at once approving of the minister, as a true and qualified servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and graciously assisting him in every good word and work connected with his ministry. This capital distinction must be carefully observed; it will essentially assist us through the whole of this discussion, and disentangle many difficulties otherwise inextricable. A separate illustration of the senses above-mentioned will enable us more completely to dis-

cover their importance, and, consequently, to apply them with the greater precision.

First, then, as to a Divine operation in the general sense. It is readily acknowledged, that such an universal influence continues to control mankind, for the preservation and order of society, preventing innumerable crimes and miseries, and promoting an infinite variety of general good. In this sense the hearts of all men are in His hands, and he turneth them as the rivers of waters. In this sense, also, he often works imperceptibly, and in a manner utterly inexplicable; the mind not consciously concurring with an over-ruling Influence, in advancing the Divine purpose, though it co-operate to its accomplishment in the most effectual way. This kind of Divine influence may extend to the communication of what are termed in Scripture "the gifts of the Spirit." St. Paul has observed, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues." These, indeed, were gifts extraordinary, and, as such, peculiar to the primitive times; but no one doubts of their being perfectly distinct from the Spirit itself, and from the fruits or graces of that Spirit, which are the effects of his constant in-dwelling in the soul; and no one doubts of their having been possessed by some who were total strangers to the life of God in the soul. In this view they may be considered as analogous to the various natural endowments of ministers in every age,—endowments which God appoints as answering to the various dispositions and necessities of the people. With such endowments, in the same view, may be classed the over-ruling Power above-mentioned, by which the mind is influenced in the use of its attainments. From this sense of the operations of the Holy Spirit, it is manifest, that the words of satan himself, recorded in different parts of Scripture, may have been occasioned and directed by God for our instruction. And as ministerial gifts are principally designed for public use, it is rational to presume, that God, the first great Cause, will operate on these second causes, as far as may be consistent with his perfections and counsels, so as to direct them, in some degree, to

the promotion of their grand purpose, even if the minister pervert them to his own destruction.

2. The Holy Spirit operates on the mind of the preacher, specially and graciously approving both of the mind itself, and of the means it adopts to promote the work of God. This, indeed, implies a previous reception of the Spirit, in the way in which all believers have been regenerated, and are enabled to call God "Abba, Father." "For all things," saith the Apostle, "are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." Here personal religion, and a call to the ministry, are evidently united. See also 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2. But now the Holy Ghost, in a peculiar manner, suggests means of usefulness to the mind of his servant, and assists him in an extraordinary and conscious way to apply them. In this sense He inspired the prophets and apostles; and, in the same sense, though not in the same miraculous and infallible manner, he inspires his faithful ministers in every age. Thus the difference between the former sense of the Spirit's operations, and that we have now explained, lies in this, that, in the former, nothing more is included than the gifts; in the latter, gifts and graces are combined. Now, the immediate gifts and inspiration of the Spirit which assist the faithful minister in the execution of his great work may be considered as proportioned in degree, as well as kind, to the graces he is possessed of. For, though his natural fitness for a call to the ministry, and the will of God to furnish him with that call, rather than another of the same natural fitness and equal piety, are unconditional and unmerited, founded solely on the principle of an arbitrary election, which is a prerogative of God; yet the actual communication of the call may be expected to depend on the present existence of the graces, and the subsequent discharge of its duties on the improvement of those graces. The gifts are given, indeed, as before observed, for the sake of the church; they are, nevertheless, a blessing to the minister himself; and, as in proportion to his application and faithfulness will be his reward, so, in proportion to his communion with God and personal religion, will be his reception of the gifts, and, of course, his ability to apply himself with success. And thus, by the way, we see the reason why pious ministers are, in general, much more useful than others.

It will be confessed at once, that God requires of all who

preach his Gospel that they receive the Divine Spirit in this second and most important sense. But some of them, it is evident, though possessed of it to a certain extent, are contented with by far too small a portion; others have lost it entirely, and forfeited their call to the ministry; and not a few, we may explicitly assert, have never known experimentally whether there be any Holy Ghost. Does it follow, as to the two last of these examples, that the people who are unhappily burdened with such pastors have no possibility of being fed with the bread of life? Because they have not the best means, are they possessed of none at all? Salvation is certainly within the reach of every human soul; and in Christian countries no man is justified in neglectin public ordinances, whatever be the deficiencies attendant on such ordinances. When the minister is demonstrably a wicked man, the people, in many places, cannot change him for a better. And as to others, who possess a variety, it is impossible for them to know, in all cases, whether the preacher they in general hear enjoys the Spirit or not. It is, therefore, to be expected that some good will be done through the instrumentality of those preachers who have not the Spirit of God in the second sense. But all the good that is done upon the earth, is done by God; consequently, they must have been under the operation of the Spirit in the first sense. This is further evident, from existing facts of usefulness, by means of men known to have been destitute of the grace of God. And the point seems to be placed beyond dispute, when we consider the excellent prophecy of the impious Balaam, the probability that Judas wrought miracles, as well as the rest of the disciples, and the following case of Caiaphas, recorded John xi. 47—53: "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: And the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: But being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death." I

have no doubt at all, that the Spirit of God sometimes suggests to carnal ministers texts of scripture, arguments, and illustrations, and a certain manner of treating the whole, for the purpose of conveying salvation to the hearers.

Where the people have a measure of the Holy Spirit, and the pastor none,—a case which will sometimes occur,—he may, nevertheless, be useful, under the operation of the Spirit in the first sense; for, we may boldly affirm, that God will not leave his people without a blessing, because of the moral unfitness of the instrument. Where neither the pastor nor the people are endued with saving grace, the good done, if any, will, of course, be less, and that in proportion to the resistance made by the parties to the strivings of the Holy Spirit. But even here some good effects will sometimes occur. For instance: God may work in answer to the prayers of the relatives and friends of the parties; prayer, perhaps, presented many years before. Also, other causes may concur, to make "springs to rise out of the dry ground," and the desert to "rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Thus there is, probably, no case in which the truths and ordinances of the Gospel are at all observed, but God strives, more or less, with the consciences of the people, by his Holy Spirit, wisely suggesting and directing his doctrine, for the purpose of conviction, and that without impinging the liberty of the ministerial agent, though he purpose nothing but his own pleasure, praise, and emolument. How far God over-rules the preparations and public administrations of such men, it is impossible to say. It is evident, however, that though a Divine influence works imperceptibly, human art prevails throughout. The speaker looks for no Divine assistance. Perhaps, he has no belief that such an influence is communicated to any man; or, if he confess the fact, he expects nothing of the kind for himself, his conscience bearing him witness, while he asks, that he is unworthy to receive: He trusts only in his own powers, and applies them alone to the production of discourses, intended merely to fill up the hour, or to show his own skill and ability.

The above remarks, on the operations of the Spirit, in the case of ungodly ministers, will not, it is hoped, be construed as forming any apology for the impious conduct of such men, or as intended to insinuate a propriety in their continuance as public

officers in the church of Christ, and preachers of the glorious Gospel. What has been said is chiefly designed to explain an important distinction in the operations of the Spirit, which distinction it is necessary to keep in mind, in order to ascertain, as near as possible, the object of the question.

With respect to the operations of the Holy Spirit in the second and best sense, they are unquestionably enjoyed, more or less, by every faithful minister. He that lays the burden on us will give us strength to bear it. But, as already observed, we do not possess the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. We are required to use our natural powers in a different way to that of the apostles and first preachers. And how far it becomes us to make use of human art, and how far we are to expect the assistance of the Spirit, seems a question of importance to us, who acknowledge, that both are absolutely necessary to the proper discharge of public preaching.

In running over the several parts of this complicated duty, in order to determine, as far as possible, to how many of these parts the human art may be applied, I have not been able to fix on one in which it is not necessary, and that to the utmost ability of the preacher. In the actual exercise of preaching, when the work is most arduous, and the Holy Spirit may be expected to operate in the most powerful manner, it seems proper that the preacher should put forth all his strength, in the exercise of his judgment, memory, imagination, and passions. How much more so, then, in the more deliberate preparations! This appears a just conclusion from the following considerations:—

1. It is reasonable to expect, that every preacher should clearly understand, and duly feel, his subject. He is never so far to resign the use of his natural powers, as to become the involuntary instrument of an impulse or passion,—speaking reveries unintelligible to himself, and in a manner inconsistent with his peculiar genius and character, as a man of great or small knowledge, great or small reasoning powers, great or small imagination, &c.

2. We find this to have been the fact, with regard even to the inspired writers, who felt the highest degrees of inspiration. Each writes in his own style and manner, using his own phrases, and often his own peculiar mode of reasoning, on subjects treated by the others. From which it appears, that, though God suggested the matter of their discourses, so as to impress it upon

their minds, he left them, as men of sound intellect, to use their own talents in the delivery of them; only, in this respect, preserving them from error, by a superintendent inspiration.

3. If a case could exist in which the proper and full exercise of the human faculties was not required, it would follow, that the preacher would be, so far, deprived of his liberty; and, consequently, he could not be accountable for the facts of which he was the instrument. His state of mind would be an absolute rapture. The intelligent exercise of his mental powers being suspended, he would be reduced to the character of a mere machine. But this seems contrary to the views commonly given of the Christian ministry, which, in the Holy Scriptures, is represented as a charge of the most awful weight and responsibility.

It has already been observed, indeed, from Dr. Doddridge, that inspiration of suggestion supersedes the use of the faculties; and this was literally true, with respect to certain instances among the inspired writers, to whom he refers the observation. For the doctrines and facts in which the prophets and apostles were sometimes instructed, could never have been discovered by the most sublime process of the unassisted reasoning powers. This is far from being the case with us, who are not required to add any one fact by revelation, or doctrine by invention, to the number so completely furnished in the Scriptures. An inspiration of suggestion may, however, still be necessary, with regard to the treatment of such religious truths as have long been clearly established by God himself. The existing circumstances of the preacher, and the state of his mind, may be such as to require a Divine suggestion of truths that have been forgotten, and of methods in propounding them, peculiarly fitted to promote some valuable end. But these circumstances are unavoidable, and not occasioned by the fault of the preacher.

If he wilfully neglect the requisite preparations belonging to the pulpit, however God may bless his feeble productions to the people, no particular assistance or comfort may be hoped for by the preacher. From which it appears, there is no allowance given whatever for a relaxation of the human powers.

Again: In like manner I have considered the particulars in which preaching consists, with a view to find how far the Divine assistance may extend; and the conclusion, as in the case above, has been, that it ought to be solicited in every step of the work.

Is it the duty of every one to ask the blessing of God—which, in fact, can only be communicated by the Holy Spirit—on his secular concerns, and shall not the ministers of his word ask the direction and influence of the same Spirit in every particular that nearly relates to the discharge of their great work? Did Dr. Johnson ask the help of God in composing the "Rambler," and shall we not beg of God to inspire us, and to aid our endeavours to acquire the lowest elements of the art which he renders subservient to the salvation of souls?

Were any instance to be found, in which man could of himself perform the whole of this important duty, it would probably be that of an extraordinary eloquence. But hear what God himself hath said of Aaron: "I know him, that he can speak well;" and yet on one occasion, great enough to call such talents into action, it seemed necessary that God should say, "I will be a mouth and wisdom to him."

The inspiration of the Holy Spirit seems particularly necessary to counteract the powers of satan, which we may justly presume are very forcibly, and with inconceivable cunning, directed against the preachers of the Gospel.

This, at least, must be observed, that the gracious operations of the Spirit, enjoyed in common by all true believers, are more especially of use to ministers, for their assistance in even the lowest preparatory study, and that for several reasons:—1. That the end of the whole may constantly be kept in view. Without this, the means in question will not be duly measured, but subject to excess or defect, or perverted to false purposes; such as mere pleasure, vanity, &c. 2. That, from a sense of duty and of the importance of the work, excited and kept up by means of this Divine influence, the mind may be induced to prosecute every study in a proper spirit, with due diligence, and perseverance. 3. That, in the consultation of various authors, and the conflict of opinions thence occasioned, the mind may be preserved from every fatal error, being impressed with a lively sense of the essential doctrines of the Gospel. From the soul being thus furnished with the light of life, Divine truths will be the more readily apprehended, distinguished, and enforced on the minds of the people. This life of God will also do more to assist nature in the acquisition of human attainments, than any thing in the world besides.

It must, indeed, be acknowledged that the same lively degree

of inspiration is not to be felt in all cases; in the study of human science preparatory for the pulpit, and in the exercise of prayer and preaching; but the special help of God is never to be completely excluded.

This ordinary inspiration will not exclude all imperfection, and guide the very tongue and pen of the minister; for this, as has been observed, is not now necessary. This inspiration includes that, in particular, which produces holy purposes and habits, together with a superintendent inspiration over the understanding to preserve from fatal errors. It is absurd to suppose, that persons acting under the guidance of the Holy Ghost should not act faithfully.

As a guide to this difficult part of the subject, it should be carefully remembered as a universal axiom, that God makes use of no more means than are strictly necessary for the accomplishment of his designs. For it is a known rule among the ancient fathers, that where the Holy Ghost had been given before, and yet is said to come again, it is to be understood either of an increase of the former effusion, in weight and measure, or of some new gift which before men had not, but was conferred after for some new effect. As the genius and circumstances, and consequently the necessities, of preachers differ, so he graciously apportions the assistance of his Spirit. Plenary and extraordinary inspiration was necessary to provide the world with a convenient and perfect standard of doctrine. When the end was accomplished, the means by which it was so peculiarly effected would cease. On the same principle we may rationally conclude, that, in every age, the workman who is duly called to engage in this super-human undertaking, will be furnished with grace according to his day. And while the perfect rule is open for the examination of every one, whatever help is necessary to make it clearly understood, and to render it effectual, will be freely afforded to its guardians and expounders. Whether they be called to address a sceptical and profane people at home, or to venture on the more important and more dangerous attempt to preach the Gospel to barbarous nations, their Master will provide them, by his Holy Spirit, with wisdom, persuasion, and fortitude, altogether suitable to such various occasions.

The grand faculties of the mind employed in preaching, are understanding, the inventive powers, and the passions; for these

alone, in their own nature and proper exercise, are sufficient to counteract the ignorance and evil habits of the people.

In every part of preaching which more immediately requires the exercise of the understanding, a superintendent inspiration may be expected.

An inspiration of suggestion, in the sense already applied to preaching, seems appropriate to matters that call for the inventive powers; for instance, the collecting of materials for a sermon.

The inspiration that elevates is proper for the passions. A man needs patience in thinking, and searching books, &c. until the point aimed at is accomplished. It sometimes happens that one is almost wearied out, and just resolving to give over, at the moment when the point is gained. Had he given in, one moment sooner, the point would have been lost. Query: Is not an inspiration that elevates sometimes afforded to support the patience and animation of the student, till the end is gained? It is true, this animation may, perhaps, be supported mediately, and by other motives; but is it unreasonable to suppose that God should not directly by his grace support it?

It is farther to be observed with respect to faithful ministers, that the Spirit of truth can never be the immediate cause of the errors in doctrine which they sometimes advance, and the gross mistakes of interpretation sometimes made by them. These must be placed to the account of human art in a defective state. Neither, in any occasional instance of negligence, intention, motive, or passion, that is sinful, can the preacher, however holy in his general character and habits, expect the gracious help of the Holy Spirit. But even here that Spirit may over-rule the whole for some important good effect, by his operation in the first sense.

It should also be most carefully remembered, as illustrating the subject with regard to the degrees of Divine influence, that certain states and frames of the mind are found to be peculiarly fit as preparations for receiving the Holy Spirit. The Jews considered sadness and melancholy, on the one hand, and flippant and furious passions, on the other, as unfitting a man for the prophetic influence. Hence Elisha called for a minstrel, to soothe and cheer his mind. And the Talmuds have a tradition, that Moses was unfit to prophesy in the wilderness, after expressing his indignation against the spies that went to Canaan.

This may reasonably be supposed. It is according to the nature of things. The like effects will, therefore, be found in every age of the church. And, here, we are taught how preachers of the Gospel should watch over their own hearts, and even their health; here we learn how they ought to rise above the disturbing influence of worldly concerns, and how necessary it is we should ascend the pulpit in the spirit of devotion.

The subject is too important to be dismissed without adverting to a few practical conclusions.

1. The necessity of human art in a business of such consequence calls for the utmost diligence. It becomes us to catch at every kind of knowledge, and seize every opportunity that may assist our usefulness. And the promised help of the Spirit, instead of leading us to sloth, should make us grateful for the extraordinary honour bestowed upon us. And how can gratitude to God produce less than the most prompt and cheerful obedience to his commands?

Let us not despise human knowledge. Not only the principles advanced in the foregoing pages, but numerous instances that might be mentioned, sufficiently evince with what advantage it may be used in the service of the pulpit. The extreme of neglecting it is of the two the most common.

"If we are honoured with the pastoral office," says the pious John Fletcher, "let us consider the Holy Scriptures as an inexhaustible mine of sacred treasures. In the law of the Lord let us meditate day and night. Before we attempt to deliver evangelical truths in public, let it be our first care to penetrate our hearts, in private, with an adequate sense of those truths. Let us arrange them in the most suitable order: Let us adduce and compare the several passages of Sacred Writ, which appear to support or explain the particular doctrines we mean to insist upon: But, above all, joining faith and prayer to calm meditation, after becoming masters of our subject, let us humbly ask of God that παῤῥησία, that 'lively and forcible elocution,' which flows from the unction of grace.

"And here, instead of resting contented with barely requesting, we should labour to acquire what we seek, by frequently stirring up the gift that is in us. Let us embrace every opportunity of exhorting both believers and catechumens. Let us carry, with unwearied constancy, instruction to the ignorant, and consolation to the afflicted. Let us be faithful in reproving sinners

of every class, and diligent in training up the children of our parish.

"It is necessary, indeed, to be scrupulously cautious, lest we abuse the liberty of preaching from meditation, by becoming followers of those who are more worthy of censure than imitation. There are pastors of this kind, who, having acquired a good degree of spiritual knowledge, and a wonderful facility of expression, unhappily begin to pique themselves upon appearing before a numerous assembly without any previous study. Conscious of their own ability, these self-sufficient preachers make little or no preparation for one of the most solemn duties that can possibly be discharged. They hasten to a crowded auditory without any apparent concern; and, coming down from the pulpit with an air of the same easy confidence with which they ascended it, contentedly return to that habitual listlessness which had been interrupted by the external performance of a necessary work. Alas! if these presuming pastors could be prevailed upon to write over their sermons, to how much better purpose might they thus employ their hours, than by heedlessly trifling them away in frivolous conversation and shameful inactivity!"

2. We must solicit the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the use of all suitable means, and more especially that of prayer.

3. It is obvious to remark, farther, from some particulars already mentioned, that, while we see but little fruit of our labours, we should not be utterly discouraged, and imagine that God has taken his Holy Spirit from us. For as good is sometimes done when the Spirit only operates on the preacher in the first sense, already explained, so it often happens that little or no good is done by the instrumentality of a minister who is full of the Holy Ghost. This is owing to unbelief, love of sin, and evil habits in believers. The ill success of the preaching of our Lord, and of Jeremiah, when compared with far inferior prophets and preachers, demonstrably proves the common observation to be false, that he is the best preacher who does the most good.

The practical inferences deducible from the case of the Spirit's operation in the first sense, are these:—That, if good is done at all through such a medium, it must be comparatively in very inferior portions: That, on the supposition of considerable good, no reward can follow to the carnal instrument. He has done nothing in true faith; and, therefore, his good works cannot be

rewarded; for they have partaken of the nature of sin. As well might the sun be rewarded for propagating light and heat. And the preacher's last account with the great Head of the church must be truly awful, and his punishment very extraordinary. The consequences of his slothfulness have been unutterably injurious, and the pernicious effects of his general conduct dreadful beyond conception. Human nature shudders at the sentence that must ensue.

THE

POETICAL REMAINS

OF

THE REV. DAVID M'NICOLL,

INCLUDING HIS

ESSAY ON THE USES OF POETRY.

EDITED BY HIS SON.

PREFACE.

The wish which has been expressed by many friends of my late father, that his poetical efforts might be collected and published, whilst it is calculated to excite the grateful acknowledgments of the family, may justly give rise to an apprehension, lest this small collection may prove unworthy of *their* kindness and of *his* memory.

The disadvantages which always attend posthumous publications here exist in all their force. Not only are some of the pieces wanting in that polish and finished correctness which they would, doubtless, have received had publication been intended; but there is also an obvious lack of one more prominent and extended article, by which some degree of importance would have been conferred upon the whole, and to which the small pieces would have served as suitable subsidiaries. Such would have been the "Pleasures of Devotion," which stands at the commencement of these poems, had the writer's life been spared to complete the design which he had formed, and on which he was engaged at the time of his decease.

To those who were acquainted with my father's attachment to works of imagination, and who perceive in these few pages traces of poetic genius, it may appear remarkable that he should not have produced some poem of greater length, on which his powers of invention might have been displayed to better advantage. I would, however, remind such persons of the active nature of his ministerial engagements, and the calls of more congenial and important labours. Besides, his diffidence and sensibility would have shrunk from assuming the semblance, or endeavouring to attain the honours, of the poet. His exercises in this department were the result of his own native taste and inclination, and were but the embodied manifestations of his perception of the beautiful, whether in art or in nature.

The degree of poetical merit which may be considered as attaching to these productions, is a question which cannot with propriety be entertained or discussed by the present writer.

The creations of the poet, like the lofty conceptions and vivid

touches of the painter, are not to be defined; and even industry, which overcomes almost every obstacle to human achievement, cannot here supply what nature has denied. To produce verses of moderate value is, indeed, within the reach of most persons of good education and competent command of language; but to clothe them with the warmth and feeling of reality, requires the inspiration of song,—the gift of nature alone. The possession of some degree of the same faculty affords the principal means of discovering its existence in others; and this must ever form the basis of a critical judgment. Ease, correctness, and an harmonious freedom from laboured design, are characteristics which bespeak the true capacity for poetry, whilst their absence can be but very partially supplied by the efforts of steady perseverance and well-applied ingenuity.

The varieties of style and matter afforded by the several writers of works of imagination, are admirably suited to the different tastes and mental peculiarities of readers. Every intermediate grade may be procured, from the depth and intellectual grandeur of Milton, to the softness of Waller, and the unaffected simplicity of Bloomfield and Gay. And, although the degrees of merit thus discoverable in these writers are as many as their numbers, and as varied as their names, there are certain marks of individuality which must ever give to each its peculiar value.

In this view the humblest attempts are to be prized, as diversifying and enlarging the general stock of our rational enjoyments.

For much of what these pages contain it may be necessary for me to apologize. The reader will meet with some fragments, whose abruptness and unfinished state may produce unfavourable impressions. With all the weaknesses and marks of juvenility, however, which appear in a few of the earliest of his compositions, this volume is presented to those friends who have requested its appearance, and whose kindness on many occasions was the inspiration under which it was written.

"An Essay on the Uses of Poetry," published by my father in one of the Annuals a few years ago, is prefixed, as harmonizing with the subject.

D. H. M'N.

London,
August, 1836.

AN ESSAY

ON

THE USES OF POETRY.

It has been said, that poetry is the language of nature. This is true, but not the whole truth. The same imperfect definition will apply to philosophy, which gives nature a tongue to tell her meaning, while poetry excites her to disclose her aspects and manner, and to breathe forth her power and spirit. The finest sympathies of the reader are thus more effectually touched than could be experienced, at least, in many instances, by the actual presence of the original, unaccompanied by any artificial description.

Why it is that certain objects, and representatives of objects, should invariably produce certain sentiments and feelings, it is useless to ask. That such is the will of the Creator, seems to be the bound of the inquiry. If He had so ordered it, the contemplation of a pair of tongs might, for aught we know to the contrary, have excited the most enraptured sense of beauty. It is with views of nature as with orators,—the more they express a power or emotion, the more it is felt by the attentive admirer. He then who has the art, from experience, or from his own natural tact and sensibility, or from both, to receive most fully into his own breast, and embody in popular language, in the best possible manner, the characters, and operations, and results of things, real or imagined, is, of course, the happiest poet.

Sometimes the greatest attention is paid to the mechanical rules of the art, to excite, if possible, the latent love and power of poetry, which, in different degrees, are possessed by all mankind. In other instances, the mighty current of poetical

emotion prevails; and here the poet appears in his own proper and commanding character. He forgets not, however, such existing rules of his art as he deems to accord with truth and judgment, for they are unchangeable. But to these he is not confined. Yet, while he bursts beyond them, he by no means violates them; he adds to their number by the light which he elicits in the fresh creations of his genius.

If such, then, be the essence of this noble species of composition, poetry is obviously founded in our common nature, and may be justly supposed to possess no ordinary influence on mankind, and on literature; an influence susceptible both of an advantageous and injurious direction. On this account the subject is deserving of every attention, in the culture of the youthful mind. Grave philosophers may despise the art, but they cannot quench its fire. It would be much more consistent with their philosophy to attempt to regulate its coruscations, lest it should obtain some fearful mastery, and be a means of much evil.

A true taste for poetry will greatly tend to strengthen the intellectual faculties.

The nature of the writing puts this beyond all question. Poetry is chiefly addressed to the imagination,—a power of great importance to the happiness of man, and which cannot be too carefully improved, supposing the other powers, particularly the judgment, keep with it, in equal march. Now, the wonderful diversity, multiplicity, and charm, from the beauty and grandeur of poetical inventions and images, must awaken the imagination to such frequent and lively exercise, as cannot fail to render it considerably quick and vigorous. And thus a dull imagination —which is much to be regretted, especially in a public writer— may acquire no small brightness and freshness from some particular attention to poetry; such an attention as, in common cases, would, no doubt, be extravagant; but which, in this, is necessary to restore the lost balance of the natural powers. The study of actual nature, as seen in the historian and the traveller, may whet the appetite for truth,—a result unquestionably of the highest importance: But this may be at the expense of a taste for a better and loftier state of things than the realities of this world, of course, can now exhibit,—a taste which comes as truly from God as the understanding itself, and is one of the finest elements of which our nature is composed.

The principle of association is likewise much indebted to the poet.—One rule of his powerful mode of writing is to present a few signs of things, which may bring into the mind, as by attraction, an immense multitude of objects, and classes of objects, which they represent, all mutually combined through certain affinities, which render it unnecessary that the writer should describe them in detail. Here the expression is very limited, but the thought is unbounded, and instantaneously supplied by the active mind of the reader. This property is most eminent in poetry; no other writings, therefore, so frequently and effectually rouse the mind to expatiate beyond the narrow limits of specified and visible existence. And as the associating faculty is of great use in almost all the other operations of the mind, as well as in the common affairs of life, its cultivation, by this, as well as by any other means, must be so far deserving of attention.

Memory may be mentioned as exceedingly improved by a frequent perusal of the poets.—This will follow from what has just been said on the law of association; because this law is of the utmost importance in the process of remembering. The measured and responsive sounds of language are also well known to contribute very essentially to the assistance of memory. But both these kinds of help fall, in this respect, far short of the extreme impressiveness of poetry, and the sweet and awakening interests which entrance and command the soul. These need not here to be minutely pointed out. And it is almost unnecessary to add, that whatever is most deeply felt takes the firmest hold of the recollection: The effect, indeed, is the same if the interest be painful. Hence some teachers have fixed a fact for ever on the mind of a dull scholar, by repeating it aloud, and pinching his ears at the same time. It answers, however, to the uniform experience of mankind, that whatever they are anxious, and interested, and pleased to remember, they can commonly retain. People sometimes complain of their memories in regard to Divine truth and duty; but they seldom forget the injuries they have suffered, and the debts that are owing them. If, therefore, poetry be the most affecting mode of communicating truth, it must be the most powerfully strengthening to the memory, both of the poet and his reader.

Nor do I see why the understanding should not share in the improvement of the other powers of the mind just noticed, as

well as receive advantage from its own direct operations, in determining the import and value of the poet's subjects and management. In forming a right judgment on any subject, it is of great advantage to view it distinctly in all its parts, and possible developements and effects. But who can do so more completely than the man who has been accustomed to contemplate the material of subjects precisely in this manner? It is chiefly in this way that learning, properly so called, assists the thinkings of the mind. It furnishes the understanding with every variety of premises connected with any given topic, such as cannot be within the reach of the untutored student, as the means of facilitating an accurate and complete judgment. From the extraordinary acumen and range of the mind of Shakspeare, it has been said, "He was born learned." That poets are sometimes persons of perverted understanding, is no argument against the truth of the doctrine now asserted. Many have the name of "poet" who have no claim to the title; while others, both in their writings and in their private conduct, seem to have abandoned, merely from a humoursome disposition, that judgment which they really possessed. This is a defect in prudence, not in understanding. The great poets, however, such as Homer, Shakspeare, and Milton, were, as to this highest power of the mind, persons of prodigious strength and penetration.

But poetry is still more valuable as the vehicle of sympathy, and of the finest moral feeling.—Authority enjoins her precepts, and philosophy expounds them, and shows them placed upon the basis of their own eternal fitness and propriety. History also presents her animating examples; but poetry strikes at once into the seat of virtue,—supplies what still is wanting,—the burning states of mind by which the passive reader is quickly urged to grasp instinctively the thing which other modes of instruction coolly ask him to pursue. How this process is accomplished, need not be now explained. It is sufficient to observe, that the nature of this powerful influence, and uniform experience, serve to prove how effectually the poet can convey to the heart the liveliest touches of the loveliness and sweetness of the virtuous affections, public and private, which his art so warmly paints.

I allow that this is not true virtue, and that, such as it is, these means cannot always contribute to promote it. It may

exist in the infidel, who admits of no Divine authority, no superhuman principle of morality. It is virtue, however, by common construction, and serves to answer the temporary purposes of the present life. It is also excited and cherished, in varying degrees, by education, government, and literature. But as to justification before God, and a preparation for the society of heaven, it is, according to St. Paul, of no imaginable use. Nor can these celebrated sources of moral improvement produce, of themselves, a state of genuine holiness: They are but the glow-worm, that "pales his uneffectual fire;" while of the Holy Spirit, as the only life of the real virtues, we may affirm:—

> "'Tis by thy secret, strong, attractive force,
> As with a chain indissoluble bound,
> Thy system rolls entire."

Still, the prodigious power of poetry to affect the passions is unquestioned. It instantly awakens the languid principles and sentiments of the reader; and, when the higher influences of the Divine Spirit strike in, and regulate the natural emotion, it is found to be an admirable means of moral and religious excitement: For this reason, the poetry of the Scriptures, together with the devotional pieces of good writers in this department of genius and piety, are found to be of inestimable advantage in Divine worship, and in the revival and confirmation of every moral and religious feeling. Religion may run in this, as well as in any other natural channel. The same organic voice and language, which we employ in mercantile affairs, serve equally as the vehicle of our holiest adorations. It is, however, an important remark, that, where no real piety exists, the best poetry in the world cannot, of its own force, give it an existence; but if there be concealed in the heart any spark of its essence, the poetry of a Watts or a Wesley may be expected to inflame it. Both the poet and his reader must possess at once the poetic and the pious taste; the one to produce religious poetry of some excellence, and the other to receive its useful impressions. Where there is a perfect union of these two congenial yet separable tastes, the effect must be exceedingly powerful. The moral and religious truths adduced, and the characters, passions, sentiments, and manners described by the bard, will be indelibly fixed upon the mind, from the imposing richness with which they

are arrayed, and the extreme pleasure by which they are transmitted to the heart.

In poetry, the subjects are more fully and forcibly depicted, and brought out to the eye of the mind, than in any other kind of writing. Things are seen in all their due dimensions and colours. They speak for themselves without the assistance of a philosophical or logical inquiry; and at least a practical knowledge of them is acquired, as with a glance, or by intuition. It is to this descriptive property we owe the sharpness of satire, and the general impressiveness of character and the passions, as distinctively brought out to view by the magical draught and imitation of the poet. A similar conception of an infinitely higher subject is expressed by M. Dacier, in his Preface to Plato. "It is unbecoming the majesty of God," he observes, "to prove the necessity, justice, or truth of what he commands. He powerfully influences the heart to love his commandments, and this is more than proving them."

To these remarks on the value of poetic writing, we may add the fact of its favourable, though indirect, influence on many other branches of refinement and literature. For example: Taste in poetry insensibly imparts itself to prose composition; and he who would improve his general style must be deeply conversant with the poets. Not that his prose should be really poetical, as the nature and rules of this kind of writing are widely different from those of poetry. Nothing, indeed, is more disgusting than the same accumulation of epithets, and the same straining at a bold feeling and expression, even in the fervid appeals of the orator, which, in poetry, would be felt to be judicious and affecting. But the same general principles of taste, and of genius, are requisite in both; and if these are more completely unfolded and matured by an acquaintance with poetry, their legitimate application to prose will greatly raise and refine both the diction and the sentiment. It is perfectly surprising to see with what an artful management the poet can vary the form and construction, the strength and inflection, the tints and shadows, of the language in which he writes. This cannot fail to preserve the prose of the lover of poetic writing from sinking into the plainness and coldness to which, when unsupported, it is naturally inclined. The philosophers and celebrated public speakers of antiquity, are all believed to have been deeply indebted to the poets. Among the moderns, where shall we

find styles, as to energy and beauty, to exceed those of Milton, Dryden, and Addison? The study of poetry is, therefore, deserving of a prominent place in a system of literary instruction.

And when we also reflect, that the great and popular writings of the poets are continually enlivening and adorning the general intercourse of society, by the elegant and instructive references which they so amply furnish; and that he whose mind is richly embued with the spirit of their works enjoys a refined pleasure in viewing men and things in the exquisite colouring of the poet; (a colouring which frequently, as we have hinted, gives perpetual freshness to what is naturally beautiful, and softens that which, in the nakedness of nature, is sometimes sharp and rough;) we must allow that this incomparable art is a gift from God, demonstrating, with his other gifts, the kindness and beneficence of the Giver. In short, poetry is so perfectly natural, that mankind, in the infancy of society, have scarcely any other language; and so rational, that nations, in a state of the highest refinement, confess how much it has contributed to their progress in civilization, and strive to pay the debt by promoting in their turn whatever may extend and perpetuate the interest of the Muse. And, we may add, it is so scriptural, that the most majestic scenes of nature and of Providence, of grace and of glory, are sung by the inspired bards in strains almost as lofty as their theme.

A few counsels to the youthful admirer of poetry will conclude this little Essay.

In the first place, let him beware in this, as in every other pleasing pursuit, of unrestrained indulgence. Excess is always, even in the best of things, on many accounts injurious, even to the pleasure which tempts to this excess. A due supply of oil will produce a beautiful and continued light; too much will quickly quench your lamp in darkness. Court the Muse improperly, and her pleasant smiles will soon be turned to chilling frowns. He enjoys most of the pleasures of this study who grasps them not too fiercely, and only at suitable intervals. Milton says of the pleasures of society what is applicable here:—

"And short retirement urges sweet return."

Besides, this extravagance must produce a morbid state of the

feelings. The mind will be shorn of its strength, and a general effeminacy mark out the character for pity and contempt. Are players men of the strongest minds? In company, the poetical enthusiast can always quote the poets with correctness and rapture; but converse with him on history, science, and divinity, and you will find that he has had neither taste nor time for the acquisition of any competent degree of these attainments. Remember, you ought to seek for opportunities to store your mind with valuable knowledge; and, above all, to improve your heart by a vigorous application of every means enjoined by Divine authority, and furnished by Divine Providence, for this best of all purposes. A just balance should be observed in the cultivation of the human powers. Lord Lyttleton recommends, that, as studies, poetry and the mathematics should always be conjoined. This is sound advice. They will mutually assist each other, and both correct and elevate the mind. Here we have, as is most meet and necessary, at once, the excursive horse, and the regulating reins. Young people ought to know, that they are possessed of understanding, and of conscience, as well as of fancy and of feeling.

We think, in the next place, that those who are "smit with the love of song" ought to be very choice and select in this kind of reading. Not that a cursory view of poetic works, in general, is at all improper; on the contrary, it may be useful in many respects, and no inconsiderable source of pleasure. But there is a vast proportion of indifferent poetry, which it would be wholly loss of time to study. And suppose, indeed, it were all excellent in the highest degree, it would be impossible to peruse the twentieth part of so voluminous a body of materials without interfering with higher duties, and without enfeebling the mind, by an exercise so cursory and superficial. Let a select number of our best and purest poets be more frequently resorted to, that you may thoroughly understand the art, and be deeply imbued by its spirit. Milton, Young, and Thomson, are inexhaustibly rich in their several styles and subjects, and will never fail to charm and improve the heart.

The most important advice, however, is, that we never lose sight of the higher ends of poetry. Mere pleasure is not, in general, a design that can justify an attention to any study. There is a luxury to be avoided here, as well as in the enjoyments of the table.

Very valuable doctrines and sentiments may be derived from the poets. Truths which are worked out in the fervour of poetic feeling are often more original, more just, and more profound, than those which result from the common thinkings of mankind. Consult the poets occasionally, with a view simply to obtain instruction; and though you strip the ideas of their poetic dress entirely, in all probability you will gain many useful additions to your knowledge. For instance: How many beautiful principles and theories are contained in Akenside's admirable poem on "The Pleasures of Imagination," which have frequently been quoted by Dugald Stewart, as confirmations of his own "Philosophy of the Mind!" But impressions are of still greater moment than convictions; and in reading poetry we ought to feel the characters, manners, sentiments, and passions, with an emotion which impels us to assume their excellence, or to revolt from their viciousness. This property of song is of great use in religious poetry. Devout feelings are inspired, the love of heavenly things is excited, and the spirit of Divine worship raised and inflamed. It is true, the proportion of good religious poetry is but small; for poets, as a body, have never been distinguished for their piety, and piety is just as necessary to the composition of excellent poetry in this department as genius itself. A proper and intimate communion with Divine things cannot commonly be imitated by one who is a stranger to its peculiar and transcendent operations and characters; as a man may, by the working of his intellectual conception, throw himself into those states of mind and feeling which are within the reach of the natural powers, unaided by religion. Intense devotion, joined with genius, must be an extraordinary source of invention and expression. This is evident, even in the prose writings of our best devotional writers. The letters of Samuel Rutherford, Professor of Divinity, St. Andrew's, is a striking instance. Occasionally quaint, and rough, and familiar, he has been scorned by the impious wits of every age since their first appearance in the religious public; yet the candid reader will often perceive in those valuable letters an originality, a power, a brilliancy of conception, truly wonderful; and which no genius could have produced, uninfluenced by the burning sentiments of piety, which that good man possessed in so eminent a degree. Much of the same happy combination of genius and piety is found in Watts and Wesley, and some few

others of the same class, whose memory ought ever to be gratefully revered for the great assistance they are daily affording to thousands of pious Christians, in the excitement and expression of their public and private devotions. To familiarize the young mind with religious poetry, well selected, and frequently to yield to the sweet and salutary states of mind which it inspires, is certainly the most legitimate and useful application of this beautiful art.

POETICAL REMAINS.

THE PLEASURES OF DEVOTION.

(AN UNFINISHED POEM.*)

DEVOTION ! holiest offspring of the skies,
Friend of the contrite, of the good, and wise !
Teach me a song unknown to fancy's dream,
Thyself my inspiration and my theme.
Come, prophets, martyrs, and ye banded few,
Sent by your Lord, rise to my raptured view ;
Lend your pure fires, and pour the unclouded ray,
To light the Muse on her celestial way.
But, chiefly, Spirit of the Eternal One,
Gift of the Father's love, sent by the Son,
The Guide, the Comforter, the pleading Friend,
By whom, with groans, our inwrought prayers ascend,—
O might thy hallow'd energy Divine
Feed every spring of thought, trace every line,
Stamp the just precepts of the suppliant art,
And bid the song transmit them to the heart !

Primeval Power ! when first the sons of light,
Bright morning stars, burn'd on the brow of night,
By thee inspired, their symphony they sung,
And God's high throne with adorations rung.
Full-vision'd with intelligence, they gazed
Each on the glittering host, rapt and amazed,
To know the Almighty One, whom none could trace,
To hear some secrets of his purposed grace,
To view the Source of being in their own,
God in his image, God supreme, alone ;
The God without a cause, or bound, or end,
Whom none may judge, whom none can comprehend ;

* It was my father's intention to divide the subject of this poem into four parts, including the Closet, the Field, the Family Altar, and the Pulpit ; and he had formed an outline of the principal points to be introduced. The Introduction, the Closet, and the Episode of the Widow, are the only finished portions.

Essential life, around, beneath, above;
The infinite sublime of power and love;
Wholly in every place—diffused, immense;
Unseen, untouch'd—yet felt; serene, intense;
All truth, all justice, and all holiness,
Unfading centre of true loveliness.
Immutable, unmoved; sole, ceaseless spring
Of force that moves in each created thing;
Veil'd in his own insufferable light,
That shrouds the blazing sun with tenfold night;
Yet manifest, by dazzling proofs, amid
His matchless works, that never can be hid;
Whose wisdom runs through nature's wondrous frame,
And always seeks and finds some glorious aim;
All whose perfections infinite are shown,
And summ'd in ONE—the grandeur of his throne—
GOODNESS—that ceaseless calls them into play,
And lights the glory of their boundless way;
Goodness, still flowering into love, and this
Bursting with fruits of never-fading bliss;
Goodness, the measure of the deep-struck plan,
That saved the world before the world began.

Farewell the Forum, and farewell the strife
That gives to senates all their charm and life.
Farewell the gay parterre, and gorgeous court,
Where beauty beams, and princely peers resort.
I turn me to this lone, ungarnish'd cell,
Where God, and truth, and peace, and rapture dwell:
This my strong fortress in temptation's wars;
My school where truth shines from beyond the stars.
The sainted soul here banquets with her Lord,
From all her guilt to all his love restored.

Nor need I thirst the busy world to see,
For He is more than all that world to me.
Yet, should I wish to mark its vagrant ways,
And, in the light of wisdom's boasted blaze,
To trace its source, and follow its career,
As proud it rivals some celestial sphere;
He bids me dread the hazard of the scene,
Where serpents lurk beneath its loveliest green.
He tells me all—for well he knows—how vain,
How vile is life, how steep'd in mortal pain;
Then calls the visions of a brighter day,
Describes its worlds, and adds,—"I am the way;"
Bids Contemplation spread her pictured views,
Pencill'd in sacred truth's innoxious hues,

Where even the moral storm lives on the page,
Without the dangers of its actual rage.
Secure, in converse with the King of kings,
I mingle with the universe of things:
My little solitude a mountain height,
Where crowding kingdoms press upon the sight.
Thus in the narrow centre of the eye
Are traced the boundless plain, and sea, and sky.

Might Heaven approve, this be my happy choice:—
Some sweet recess, free from tumultuous noise,
And far from scenes that dissipate, or stain
The unwatchful eye, and give the watchful pain.
The casement, deck'd with fragrant flowers, should view
Gardens, or fields, or tombs embrown'd with yew.
Perchance, at distance, starts upon the sight
A mountain peak, or ocean's dancing light,
Or valley such as Cambrian scenes expand,
Or rocks like those that gird our happy land.
From these a spirit breathes, whispering—how meet,
With glowing heart, and strains divinely sweet,
To wake the homage of that matchless Power,
Whom Nature worships in her glorious bower.

To adorn the interior of the sacred place,
Simplicity should lend her sober grace.
The impassion'd statue, and the armour'd wall,
May seem to animate the sounding hall;
The soft settee, the vase, the plumed festoon,
And dazzling glass may deck the gay saloon;
But in the solemn seat of prayer and praise,
The brightest gems would blush and quench their blaze.

Some beauties of the imitative art
Should grace the walls, and mend the ingenuous heart.
Voluptuousness let me forbear to name,
The foul possessor's and the painter's shame;
Though genius, fled from Heaven's pure school, should bring
Immortal hues to adorn the accursed thing.

Nor should the canvass hold the serious mind
From heaven by visions of terrestrial kind.
No battle-piece, though Wouverman's, should fire
The mimic scene with all a hero's ire;
No Teniers with his brawling boors; no crowd
At Mammon's shrine, to whom the world has bow'd;
No mirth of Hogarth, and no gods of Rome,
Should desecrate this venerable home.

But Raphael's grace and grandeur sweetly shed
A magic power upon the sainted head ;
And Guido's forms, beaming with joy and love,
And breathing ardours kindled from above ;
And the bold prints of other days, when heart
And soul rose full beneath the graver's art ;
Andrews and Hall, Devotion's darling sons,
Whose style of seraph-thought immortal runs ;
Prelates oft seen sublimed, just come from God,
With smiles lit up in heaven, their loved abode.
And Fletcher, too, the rapture of whose face,
Like day's bright orb, no limner's hand could trace ;
His soul a flame fed from celestial fires ;
His life consumed by Love's unquench'd desires.
Let these the sacred ornaments supply,
Which, while they charm, lift our low thoughts on high.
These—by the law that kind to kindred brings,
And marshals the affinities of things,
That from the names and pictured forms of men,
Commands, and, lo ! the dead revive again ;—
These shadows give the witchery of their power,
While Heaven exalts the meditative hour,
And the devotions of the substance rush
Full on the mind in many a raptured gush ;
For all things, to the teachable and wise,
Are conduits of the good which God supplies.

Nor should that sweet seclusion be profaned
By earthly question,—" What is lost or gain'd ?"
No visits of the gay from yon proud halls,
No mirth should wake the echo of its walls ;
No vain and curious search of science there
Should trench upon the sacredness of prayer.
A friend sometimes should lift the voice of age,
Cheerful, though full of grace and sweetly sage,
Unfolding, to confirm his faith and mine,
The blissful secrets of the life divine.

Nor on the precincts of this peaceful nook
Should lie that biting sword,—an angry book.
Let jarring teachers, prized for fierce debate,
Gild the proud shelves of literary state ;
Volumes that boast, in every bitter page,
Enormous learning, drawn from every age ;
Each ever praised the brightest and the best,
And each the confutation of the rest ;
The youthful student stands amazed to find,
No truth is true, no forms of faith can bind.

The titles trumpeting the bigot-war,
The dove divine would start and mount afar.
Such arms, that oft-times wound the wearer, lie
More fitly in the stores which war supply.

My wainscot would—well framed, but not for show—
Expand to hail, in many a beauteous row,
The hallow'd relics of the glorious dead ;
The plaints they pour'd soft as the tears they shed ;
The joys they felt, still sparkling in the page ;
The prayers they breathed, intense, yet void of rage ;
The hymns they chanted, solemn, sweet, and strong,
The rudiments of an eternal song ;
And meditations, wing'd with fire, that fly
Through Truth's bright realms, above yon starry sky.

See History wield her wand with port sublime,
And start to life the deeds of distant time ;
Wrapt in the scathless lightnings of the mind,
Science pour healing radiance on the blind,
And bare to view the everlasting springs
That form'd and feed the universe of things.
Power of the beautiful, how wide they reign !
In Nature's absence, Nature's land and main,
With all their volumed magnitudes, proud Art
Creates again upon the graphic chart.
Whence, by the Winter's fire, while storms rage loud,
The Summer beams from skies without a cloud,
Spring smiles, brown Autumn joins the general dance,
And the full group of months shakes off its trance.
A holier joy flows full upon the soul,
From truth Divine ; or in its radiant whole,
Or single section, labour'd by the powers
Of some great saint, fruit of his midnight hours :
But sweetest of the sweet—of richer charms—
The records of HIS heart whom worship warms,
Who hears of God with wonder and amaze,
But glows to rapture in the song of praise.
If poor in those, O Heaven ! on me bestow
My wealth of these, the wealth I prize below.

The ingenuous saint, glowing with strong desire—
In Faith's pure light, by Love's ennobling fire,
Can bid the obtrusiveness of life depart,
And find a peaceful closet in the heart.
If in the peopled way, and festive hall,
Devotion whisper the inviting call,
He yields to all the sacredness of prayer,
Nor heeds the mingling sounds unceasing there ;

And though no boastful sign of grace be given,
Angels are near, and waft his sighs to heaven.

The widow mourns, struck by no pointless dart,
And drinks the tears wrung from an anguish'd heart.
What shall she do? where find some sweet relief
To charm the pangs and bitterness of grief?
Can sympathy, or social joy of friends,
Kill the keen sorrow that her bosom rends?
These aggravate her wounds, and bid her mourn
The happy hours that never can return!
The cheerful lark and pensive nightingale
But wake afresh her sad responsive wail.
She deems that nature droops, and to her eye
The unclouded sun goes darkling down the sky.
For him, the fond companion of her way,
Her love, her confidence, her hope, her stay,
No more must she behold on earth again,
To share with him the cup of joy or pain;
Save when in dreams she marks his smiling youth,
Then wakes to all the agony of truth.

Devotion! swift-wing'd cherub from the skies,
How prompt to soothe her grief thy pity flies!
No cold and dark oblivion of the heart
Thy mystic powers to groaning souls impart;
But life more conscious, feeling more refined,
And all so sweet, so hallow'd, and resign'd,
So temper'd to extremes, so bound, so free,
Even tribulation sings rejoicingly.
Nor can the Libertine or Stoic share
One spark of all the joy that fires thy prayer:—
"O God of goodness! hear my mournful cry,
And view my sorrows with a gracious eye.
Behold me desolate, and weak, and stung
By many a pang from keen reflection wrung;
Behold a widow cast on life's rude shores,
Whose natives bar the inhospitable doors;
Her weeds the gloomy signal to oppress,
And wring their profits from her deep distress."

THE VOYAGE.

The vessel sprang forth on the breeze of the ocean—
No storm in the sky—all was beauteous and mild;
And the flood, like a nurse, heaved her breast with emotion,
And murmur'd her joy as she dandled her child.

The signal of love on the beach dimly waving—
The billows afar the bright sun gently laving—
And all, save the screech-owl, and surges nigh heaving
Around us, were soon from our vision exiled.

We sat, and we look'd on the twilight around us,
And heard the surge beat to the dance of the prow;
And we thought on the friends we had left, till they bound us
More closely in love than the full heart could show.
Now, the moon, on the verge of the waters ascending,
Restored the lost world to our view, softly blending
Her beautiful tints;—but the vessel is wending,
We thought, to the far haven whither we go.

Yet cheerily over the waters advancing,
The warrior-tales of the mountains we told;
Age utter'd his wit; and the deck to the dancing
Of youth rang aloud as the drum gaily roll'd.
And babes to the smiles of their mothers were smiling;
The sailor sung "Boreas," the night-watch beguiling;
The bridegroom, with many fond glances, was wiling
His bride, the young bloom of her love to unfold.

* * * * * * *

AN ELEGY

ON THE RUINS OF KIRKSTALL ABBEY, NEAR LEEDS, YORKSHIRE.

Say, raptured visitants, if ye can tell,
Whence the soft pleasures of this wilder'd scene?
What secret power imparts the ennobling swell,
And pensive feeling, of the soul serene?

Can ruin'd walls, dark aisles, and dismal caves,
Delight far more than palaces of art?
Can sober ivy, as it wildly waves,
More than the garden touch the enamour'd heart?

Did superstition form the vast design?
Or evil purposes complete the pile?
Why then emotions kindred to Divine
Sprung from a source so poison'd and so vile?

Some faults had soil'd the honour of the scene,
Where men, not angels, sought celestial climes;
Yet sometimes gentle Charity was seen,
With tears effacing much-remember'd crimes.

Beloved shrine! though thy famed life is o'er,
Thy beauty, 'balm'd, smiles through a distant day;
Though now the pious spirit is no more,
The parting look it fix'd still seems to stay.

The solemn arches throw their lengthen'd shades,
And brighter silver tints the lunar light;
The mind still hears sweet music, as it fades
In echoes round these solitudes of night.

And fitful lamps are starting on the view,
While saints crowd round the altars of their God:—
O! let me oft the vision'd scene renew,
And mark the ruin mingling with the sod!

Fair monument! a temple still thou art:
The seasons here their sweetest off'rings bring;
And tuneful worshippers, with thrilling heart,
Their votive melodies unwearied sing.

Calm seat of nameless charms!—no strife of tongues,
No shout or groan of war appals the ear;
None here inflicts, or feels, the mighty wrongs
Which vex Ambition's perilous career.

What time the ruins wave in summer-green,
Or glitter to the moon in winter snows,
One happy visitant shall oft be seen
To drink the pure enchantment as it flows.

And oft shall holy Contemplation stray,
Delighted, through this melancholy vale;
And sacred visions glide o'er all the way,
In dazzling light, to adorn the poet's tale.

She looks;—and with the magic of her eye,
The desolated shades are changed and gone;
And now the finish'd building seeks the sky,
And shines in solemn splendour to the sun.

Or evening gathers o'er the ascending groves,
And nature's harmonies around them roll;
The rapt Religious, on the walk he loves,
Joys in the deep abstractions of his soul.

Sometimes he chants aloud, moved by the scene,
As through the gloom, ling'ring, he loves to roam;
Sometimes his heart, true to life's happy mean,
Weeps o'er the ties abjured of early home.

Perchance, he listens to the distant plaint
Of shepherd's lute, incautious of the snare;
The insidious notes subdue the enchanted saint,
While memory paints the image of the fair.

"Ah, hush!" he cries, 'twixt fondness and alarm;
(The unheeded beads drop from his trembling hand;)
"I may not parley with this dreadful charm,—
'T would wrench from virtue her sublime command.

"I know it well;—a song of her whose name,
If rashly utter'd to the echoing breeze,
Might wake the sleeping embers to a flame!
Then, farewell, vows,—for love alone can please.

"O dangerous world! where strong temptations range,
Full, wide, and searching as the boundless air;
Is sweet retirement thus? Then 'tis not strange
If busy life be one vast murdering snare.

"Some guilty sentiment, I fear me, dwells
Deep in the covert of this panting breast;
Some secret foe, who 'gainst our *Rule* rebels,
And, fearful chance! may stab my peaceful rest.

"Yet—'twas a venial thought, for she was good,
And kind, and fair—O grace of Heaven forefend!
O whither am I fled?—What desperate mood,
Vex'd like the wave, strives my poor heart to rend?

"How shall I enter more yon house of prayer,
Where lies recorded that eventful vow,
Which bids—'To God's high seat for aye repair,
And cast love's wreath for ever from thy brow!'

"The sculptured saints frown through the dark'ning shade,
A deep reproof sounds from the solemn bell.
To God I *will* repair—Adieu—dear maid!"
He sigh'd, unconscious of the tear that fell.

DELIVERANCE.

IN IMITATION OF SMART'S SONG OF DAVID.

Joyful the mild returns of health;
Joyful the unexpected wealth
Which falls upon the poor;
Joyful the news received from far,
Which tells, a child, escaped from war,
Hastes to a parent's door.

Joyful the sun, when bursts the cloud ;
Joyful the sounds, so sweet, so loud,
At morn that thrill the grove ;
And joyful on the midnight waste,
To traveller, the cottage bless'd,
That bids him cease to rove.

Joyful, more joyful, is the smile
Of Mercy beaming bright, the while
Her peaceful voice I hear ;
The flash of glory bursts around ;
Stirring to ecstasy, the sound
Thrills on the astonish'd ear.

O Sun of Righteousness ! shine on !
Sweet are thy beams, the darkness gone
Of guiltiness and dread !
Now thy mild beauties, once survey'd
At distance from the dungeon-shade,
Full on my path are shed.

"GOD IS LOVE."

This, this, while Truth her trumpet blows,
The loudest, longest note that flows,
The sweetest to the heart ;
The universe below, above,
Around, responding, "God is love !
Saviour of all thou art ! "

Come, sinners, to this Saviour come !
Rebel no more ; in love is room
Angels can never prove,
Can only sing the unfathom'd song ;
To you these raptured notes belong ;—
"We know, that God is love."

THE CONTRAST.

Behold Herodias in the fitful dance,
Bending amid the radiance of her charms !
All own her power in the subduing trance,—
The sage, the monarch, and the strong in arms.
Dazzling she moves in gold and streams of light :
But—'t is not truest beauty shines so bright.

Far other vision steals upon the heart:—
'T is woman in her holiest, happiest cares;
For gems, see tears of sweet devotion start;
Her robe, nor proudly, nor unclasp'd she wears.
Her upward eye, and downcast mien so sweet,
Tell—it is Mary at the Master's feet.

The scene is changed; and she who oft had shone
A star of splendour in the transient world,
Is darken'd now at nature's dying groan,
To foul disgrace from her vain orbit hurl'd.
But see that sainted one, new risen on high,
Refulgent, fix'd in heaven's eternal sky!

TRANSLATION OF ALCUIN'S CATALOGUE OF EGBERT'S LIBRARY.

Here, duly placed on consecrated ground,
The studied works of many an age are found,
The ancient Fathers' reverend remains;
The Roman Laws, which freed a world from chains;
Whate'er of law pass'd from immortal Greece
To Latian lands, and gain'd a rich increase;
All that bless'd Israel drank in showers from heaven;
Or Afric sheds, soft as the dew of even:
Jerome, the Father of a numerous throng;
And Hilary, whose sense was rich and strong;
Ambrose, who nobly guides both Church and State;
Augustine, good and eminently great;
And holy Athanasius,—sacred name;
All that proclaims Orosius' learned fame;
Whate'er the lofty Gregory hath taught;
Or Leo Pontiff, good, with wisdom fraught;
With all that shines illustrious in the page
Of Basil eloquent, Fulgentius sage;
And Cassiodorus, with a consul's power,
Yet eager to improve the studious hour;
And Chrysostom, whose fame immortal flies,
Whose style, whose sentiment demands the prize;
All that Adhelmus wrote; and all that flows
From Beda's fruitful mind, in verse or prose.
Lo! Victorinus and Boëtius hold
A place for sage philosophy of old.
Here sober History tells her ancient tale;
Pompey to charm, and Pliny, never fail.

The Stagyrite unfolds his searching page ;
And Tully flames, the glory of his age.
Here you may listen to Sedulian strains,
And sweet Juvencus' lays delight the plains.
Alcuin, Paulinus, Prosper, sing or show,
With Clemens and Aratus, all they know.
What Fortunatus and Lactantius wrote ;
What Virgil pours in many a pleasing note ;
Statius and Lucan, and the polish'd sage
Whose "Art of Grammar" guides a barbarous age ;
In fine, whate'er the immortal masters taught,
In all their rich variety of thought ;
And as the names sound from the roll of fame,
Donatus, Focas, Priscian, Probus claim
An honour'd place ;—and Servius joins the band ;
While also moves, with mien form'd to command,
Eutices, Pompey, and Comnenian, wise
In all the lore antiquity supplies.
Here, the pleased reader cannot fail to find
Other famed masters of the polish'd mind,
Whose numerous works, penn'd in a beauteous style,
Delight the student, and all care beguile ;
Whose names, a lengthen'd and illustrious throng,
I wave, at present, and conclude my song.

PASTORAL

ON A YOUNG MINISTER DECEASED.*

Along the plain, and on his favourite hill,
The flocks wind slow ; but Lycidas is fled :
The haunts he loved,—the wood, the rock, the rill,—
All seem to sigh, "Our Lycidas is dead !"

Full well he knew the lowly shepherd's art ;
Brought back the 'wilder'd wanderers to his fold ;
Touch'd their disastrous wounds with healing smart ;
The trembling lambs snatch'd from the piercing cold.

The clear blue springs, more cooling than the morn,
And verdant pastures green, full well he knew ;
What time the lark on early breezes borne,
Or Vesper shone, thither his flocks he drew.

* This was written on the death of the Rev. William Lavers, at the request of his biographer, Mr. Elliott.

To snowy whiteness wash'd, decking the lawn,
They show'd by whom their cheerful steps were led ;
And who might say, at noon, or night, or dawn,
"The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed?"

But Lycidas no more shall walk the plains ;
His joyful reed no more attention charms ;
Ah ! who among the sorrowing shepherd-swains
Shall guard, like him, his devious flocks from harms?

Yet say not, "He is dead!"—He lives, is gone
Where the Great Shepherd reigns who call'd him hence ;
There now he roams in happier fields, where none
To skies less bright returns, joys less intense.

There, call'd to tend some higher charge, and greet
The shepherds of the true Arcadian land,
He tunes the live-long day his strains, more sweet
Than pipe could sound touch'd by our rustic hand.

Cease, then, to mourn ; think of what once he was,—
Faithful, contented, meek, and good, and kind ;
Him let us imitate in virtue's cause,
Till we, with him, those bless'd abodes shall find.

ON VIEWING WINDSOR CASTLE.

June 21st, 1830.*

Windsor, for festive sounds that oft have rung
Through thy proud halls sad messages are heard :
Sorrow a chill and silent gloom has hung
On groves which waked the joy of Twickenham's bard.

The dark, slow shadows on thy terrace tell,
All is not sunshine o'er the royal head.
The flag flaps languidly, and Time's deep knell
Echoes the dreary thought that Hope has fled.

Thy warlike breasts, and sentinels, and towers,
Speak of the siege, and feud of deadliest foes ;
And yet no drum is heard, no marching powers
Disturb thy fields where Thames still peaceful flows.

* The occasion of these verses was a visit to Windsor, during the period of anxious suspense that preceded the death of His late Majesty King George IV. which event occurred five days afterwards.

The battle is within:—Two kings of might
In fatal tournament are firmly set;
Heroes stand mute, and tremble at the sight;
For who of these shall hinder, who shall let?

He whose bright sceptre rules with sovereign sway
The sixth part of the peopled earth, stoops low;
He whom the champions of the world obey,
An image lies of weakness, and of woe.

With momentary glance his thoughtful eye
Looks back on life's gay path, now view'd afar,
But, while the vision fades—as in the sky
A rainbow melts—he turns him to the war.

For now that dreadful monarch of the grave
Triumphant smiles, grasping the glorious prize;
The victim pants with fruitless wrench to save
The assault which thousands fear, but none defies.

God of the living and the dead! whose power
Can fill or desolate all earthly thrones;
Stand forth a Saviour in the trying hour,
Regard his piteous looks, O hear his groans!

May all of sin yield to thy powerful blood—
The fault, the taint, the bondage, and the sting!
And Britons sink his frailties in the flood
Oblivious, pleading still, "God save the king!"

Then, if no more in glory's dazzling noon
He shine in courts, or sweep the woodland way;
Thy love more bright, more sweet, more lasting, soon
Shall gild his grave with Eden's opening day.

THE SEPULCHRE.

DESIGNED FOR EASTER.

The holiday had flown in peace,—the sun
Had shone on Judah with his wonted smiles,—
The cross was struck,—the dreadful deed was done;
But lived not in proud Salem's circling files
Of hill and crag,—nor in the clustering piles
That glanced on high,—nor in the looks of men.
Thus, where the horrid billow's boisterous wiles
Have late engulf'd some brave bark from the ken
Of weeping friendship, all is smooth, and hush'd again.

And shall Creation, when the Maker dies,
Not wear her deepest weeds a few short hours?
The world rolls on, and not a trace supplies
Of terrors that astound celestial powers,—
Save thy sequester'd melancholy bowers,
Gethsemane! And thou, the gibbet rock!—
Where still his sweat and blood, which in sad showers
Fast fell, lies thick and dank; and where the shock
Of earth has left its rent deep in the massive block.

Sleep on, ye sated sons of hate and blood,—
Sleeps *not* the traitor of his faithful Lord:—
Pilate and Caiaphas, murderers of the Good,
Sleep on, while conscience sings the false accord!
Yours is no envied peace;—she is not moor'd,
Your bark of joyful being: No, afar
She slumbers on the deep, which Heaven's dread word
(As Calm flies frighted at the coming war)
Shall lash aloft, till drench'd shall seem the last faint star.

Yet were not all forgetful of the groans,
The last, loud groans, of HIM who died for all.
Among the millions of mankind He owns
A few loved followers, whom fears appal,
And doubts confound; but who now frequent call,
Sorrowing, on their Divine Companion lost.
Behold!—her cup of joy now turn'd to gall,—
A pensive sister droops, and mourns the most:
Thus sighing, at the tomb she holds her watchful post:—

"My gentle Master! I had hoped to assuage
The immedicable sorrows of my heart!
The last rites are denied!—Will none engage,
Benignant Lord! to bring me where thou art?
* * * * * * * * *

Ye glistering stars, and thou, resplendent moon,
Why shine upon this guilty land,—the mart
Of cruel crimes,—which God will visit soon
With curse,—whose righteous blast even hell dare not impugn?"

Now on the sepulchre is seen to rove
Her ardent eye, and tears again to flow
From the deep fountain of her troubled love.
Ah! little reck our days such love to know;
The scene but swells the torrent of her woe;
The beam of night points to her happier days,—
Heals not, but strengthens the distressful blow,
And silvers into view, with ruthless gaze,
Mountains, lakes, temples, towers,—the memory of his ways.

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O Calvary! on thy memorable height
Extremes are press'd to their extremity!
Zion and Sinai now in thee unite:
The arms of God, and of his enemy,
On thy embattled top claim victory.
On thy brief round, the characters of things,
And fates of this vast universe, we see
In truth's clear hues, as on the golden rings
Of the famed shield were graved the scenes a poet sings.

Calvary! All language told in one full sound,—
Music from God's own voice, hushing the wail
Of penitence, whose tears deluge the ground,—
The soul's best medicine that cannot fail,—
The bold philosophy which rends the veil
From the fair reasons of His government,
Who hangs upon the cross his judgment-scale,
Teaching that love and right with all are blent;—
Calvary survives when earth's stupendous base is rent.

Yet such were not the stirring thoughts that rush'd,
Resistless, on the mind of Magdalene;
Else had her sorrows been sublimed and hush'd
In wonder at the glory of the scene.
Again she weeps, and thinks of what hath been;—
Again the dolours in her spirit wake;
Her eyes keen glancing through their watery sheen,
Like stars reflected in the ruffled lake;
And oft her woes again in livelier accents break.

The sad disciples, trooping and breathless, run,
Urged by surprise, and love, and grief, and hope.
Not fleeting heralds, nor the shades that shun
The dawn, could speed more; till, on Calvary's slope
Arrived, they pierce the tomb, whose awful cope
Is burnish'd with unearthly fires, dispread
By the bright messengers, whose touch could ope
Its massy gate; with looks of grace who said,—
And heavenly mien,—"Why seek the living 'mongst the dead?

"The Lord is risen indeed! Come, see the place
Where, in dark voluntary bondage, lay
His sacred corse; sad monument of grace!
But now he goes,—for ye have heard him say,—
To Galilee:—To meet him bend your way."
With fearful steps, hastening to Salem's towers,
They muse on what hath past;—a wild array
Of arms adds terror to their stricken powers,—
To whom fain would they urge, "What of the midnight hours?

"Art thou the ruler of the watch? O tell,
In kindness tell, the wonders ye have seen."
"How shall we paint the things ineffable,—
Deeds which have crush'd our firmest strength, I ween?
We gazed upon the night,—such hath not been
For silent beauty,—when tremendous rolls
Were felt beneath, with lightning fires between;—
The earthquake shook, as it would rend the poles,—
And sulphurous heat now seem'd to melt our inmost souls.

"Awhile o'er all, in terrible suspense,—
This dreadful prelude past,—thick darkness hung.
Then bright were seen the stars. Angels far hence,
And myriads near, their sweetest chantings sung:
At length the wide air to a trumpet rung,
As if some victor king approach'd;—so high,
So musical the note, no earthly tongue
Could tell its thrills as through the soul they fly;
So soft, and yet so strong, it seem'd to shake the sky.

"And now an angel broke the blue of heaven,
Far distant as the eye could reach; but soon
Was wafted to this earth;—all driven
The shadows of the night;—the moon
Hangs her dark veil in this unusual noon.
Now, lighting at the guarded grave, he fills
The air with sweets, as from the realms of June,
Genius of flowers! thy fragrance wide instils,
Fresh'ning the wearied vales,—gladd'ning the fervid hills.

"Bright as the flash of storms his countenance show'd,
Yet temper'd by the mildness of the morn;
His graceful robe was whiter than the shroud,
As if from fleece of heaven it had been shorn;
With dignity serene he moved, upborne
Above the ground by his own radiant wing;
He touch'd the boundary of the tomb; and, torn
Abrupt, it roll'd away with ponderous wing:—
Death groans,—Apollyon shrieks,—till hell's vex'd regions ring."

So spake the trembling guard, whom subtile gold
Had not yet wooed to falsehood's wiles of shame.
But, wend we to the sepulchre. Behold
The lonely Magdalene,—a deathless name,
If constancy of deepest love be fame.
Come, ye fond worshippers of those who die,
And see corruption, mark this heavenlier flame,—
The sweetest thrill celestial worlds supply;—
Gentle, and pure, and kind,—intense, and strong, and high.

She hears a voice, and turns her from the tomb:—
"Woman, why weepest thou? Whom dost thou seek?"
A look more anxious, and a holier bloom,
Pervade her grief-wash'd eye and burning cheek:—
"If thou have borne him hence, in pity speak!
Tell me where lies my loved and loving Lord;
And I—a woe-struck woman, faint and weak—
Will take him far away, and see restored
To rest in such lone grave as my poor bounds afford."

She said, and look'd again upon the ground,
Where late he lay, and angels linger'd still;—
The voice recalls her,—"Mary!"—seraph sound!—
Soft accent of her living Lord!—The rill
That calls the thirsty Arab to his fill,—
The rush of sweets, pour'd from the gladsome names
Of "Husband," "Brother," 'scaped from sanguined ill,—
And life, to him who dreads the appointed flames,—
Give less of genuine joy than this kind word proclaims.

New rapture dances in her veins; her eyes
Stream tears of joy her murder'd Lord to greet.
"Rabboni!" she responds; and, instant, flies
To grasp and worship at his wounded feet,—
Again she hears that voice,—so grave, so sweet,—
"Cling not with fond and covetous delight;
The time is full of swelling joy;—'t is meet
My brethren share some part: Go, end their plight;
I do not yet ascend;—thy love shall have its right."

He said, and vanish'd with sublime deport;
As some calm cloud on high moves, and is gone,
But not through heaven's wide-ranged and gorgeous court
Might one be found she loved so.—He alone
Still stood full-vision'd in her eye,—pass'd on
Still, as if absence were impossible.
Attendant angels, dazzling, had not won
Her high regard;—the lowly Master still
She knew, veil'd in Himself,—all Love, all Power, all Skill.

Her stream of mingling passions—for surprise
Fast bound all thought—roll'd back upon the spring;
Yet soon return'd:—And now despondence flies,
As at the dawn the bird of night takes wing.—
"It is the Lord!—pleasure without a sting
I feel,—strange joy!—pour'd from some fount of heaven.—
But why, why first to me, triumphant King?—
The virgin weeps;—from *me* all griefs are driven!
O! much ought I to love,—for I have much forgiven!"

LINES ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

She who in pleasure lives is dead;
A bitter life she lives:
To pensive joy thy heart has fled,
The bliss true wisdom gives.

Then fast by life's pure fount abide,
And fearless take thy fill;
If pleasures tempt, the snare deride,
And live in pleasure still.

Sweet is the filial tenderness,
That prompts thy smiles or tears;
A sweeter flower, perchance, may bless
Thy marriageable years.

Yet sweeter, infinitely far,
Thy love to God on high;
Who lit for thee his every star,
Who stoop'd for thee to die.

Thy mother may forget her child,
Or lover prove unkind;
For, oft beguiling and beguiled,
The world no faith can find.

But never shalt thou rue the day
When Jesus won thy heart;
Eternity shall pass away
Ere he from truth depart.

Thy hallow'd flame is not of earth,
Has no profane alloy;
The Saviour's love to thine gives birth,
And confidence, and joy.

His love the winter's rage disarms,
Fresh flowers to summer brings;
And paints, with more than nature's charms,
The scenery of things.

Wouldst thou thy love with him might rest?
Behold his blood, his tears!
And let his witness in thy breast
Chase all thy doubts and fears.

WOMAN.

See woman, glorious in her charms,
With gems and gold array'd;
One look of pride their power disarms,
Their brightness turns to shade.

Let woman unadorn'd appear,
True beauty yet may shine
From virtue's blush, or smile, or tear,
And make her all divine.

AN EPITHALAMIUM.

Thee, loved companion of my soul,
Maria, beautiful and kind!
In whose soft breast no passions roll
Ungenial with the purest mind:
Thee, choicest blessing of my store,
I take as from the Hand Divine:
Nor might ambition wish for more,
Since every excellence is thine.

Ye angels, guardians of my night,
Witness the hopes these eyes bespoke,
When, fond, I hail'd the dawning light
Which bade me join the gentle yoke:
Not grateful England's festive day,
When George assumed the sovereign line,
Could to the monarch's heart convey
A joy more exquisite than mine.

Let heroes from the well-fought field
Loud boast the meed of all their toil;
The victory of my love shall yield
A fairer and a better spoil:
Can any of her sex excel
Maria, Virtue's dearest child,
In whom the charms of goodness dwell,
Commanding, eminent, and mild?

No Hymen o'er those rites shall reign,
Where wedded souls to heaven belong;
Nor darts, nor bands, nor torch, shall stain
The lustre of this hallow'd song;

To Heaven's kind Majesty we owe
The loves of these auspicious hours;
The joys which from our nuptials flow
Are guided by celestial powers.

INFANCY.

Smile on, smile on, those glad eyes brightly beaming;—
For smiles are buds blowing, are beauty in flower;
But roses, and diamonds, and stars, in their gleaming,
When proud of their charms, cannot equal thy power.

Sing on, sing on, little warbler, excelling
The well-measured notes that sound forth from the choir;
More dear to thy father the chants thou art telling
Than all the gay music that starts from the lyre.

Dance on, dance on, in the arms of thy mother,
With motion untainted by passion or art;
Quick-springing to meet the proud bound of thy brother;—
Not the dance of the spheres is more sweet to my heart.

Shine on, shine on, Heaven kindled thy spirit,
To dawn and to dazzle, but never to set;
Go on, my loved child, higher joys to inherit;
Yet these happy days I can never forget.

THE CONVENT.

THE REFECTORY—DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE—SKETCH OF THE INMATES—READING THE LESSON—DEVOTIONAL FEELING EXCITED BY IT—THE ABBOT PRAYS FOR THE SPREAD OF DIVINE TRUTH—CELEBRATES THE FOUNDER'S BIRTH, BRAVERY, AND PIETY.

The Convent ranged beside the decent board,
Attentive listen'd to the deep-toned word
Read by a brother for the general good,
And, silent, each partook his portion'd food.
Such was the will of him whose pious zeal
Bade the rich fabric half the valley fill;
And such the unvaried custom of the flock,
That loved the springs beneath their guardian rock.
Secured from life's destructive blasts they keep,
As vessels moor'd from tempests of the deep;
Nor sight nor sound that damps the studious mind,
Could here distract, or any access find.
The sun durst not with gairish beams obtrude
Upon the peaceful, social solitude;

But glanced, through checquered panes, with modest ray,
And scarce appear'd to imitate the day.

The holy Fathers were a solemn sight;
Bared of their locks, a pale reflected light
Shone from their polish'd brows;—you would have said
They look'd, as if, in studied order laid,
The bones of some dark charnel-house were seen
In life's slow motions, with deep sighs between.
Grave statues on the wall appear'd the while
To look and listen with a ghostly smile.
And here the panel spread its liveliest hues,
Forms of sublimest draught, and happiest views
Of scene and history Divine, impress'd
With thought and warmth, and to the soul address'd.
For here Da Vinci, peerless of his kind,
Had pour'd the riches of his wondrous mind.

And what the lesson of the passing time?
Barak's high deeds, and Deborah's hymn sublime.
He, furious rolling in the battle-throng,
Sped his bright sword with arm divinely strong;
The giant-foe shrinks on the ground and dies;
From the choked ear Sisera descends and flies;
Meroz' dread curse resounds, and Israel's God
Breaks terribly the proud oppressors' rod;
His march is victory; Judah's mountains reel;
Clouds melt with fear, earth's deep foundation feel.

Ceased the bold hymn, but not the impulsive glow,
Which deem'd the song in echo still to flow.
Looks answer'd looks with sympathy of praise,
And the whole brotherhood in soft amaze
Shared the blest triumph of Jehovah's throne,
And proudly felt his righteous cause their own.
And the Last Supper, by his touch inspired,
Pierced every heart, and with devotion fired
The future champions of the cause Divine
More heavenly seem'd as by the mystic wine:
A sacred feast profuse without alloy,
That yields a pure, imperishable joy.
Already strengthening for the glorious strife,
They shine, new-motion'd with superior life;
And as they take the pledge of heaven's kind part,
Each vow smiles forth, "We give a faithful heart."

But, O! the awful Master of the feast!
At once the ready Victim, and the Priest!

With all the mild benignity of grace,
Which life had thrown around that blessed face!
In meekest majesty of heaven, he sate,
The grand memorial, then, the antedate
Ordaining of his conflict thus reveal'd,
And now prepared to take the dreadful field.
Merged was the noble painter, sunk his art,
And sympathy Divine engross'd the heart.
Through the long hall with shading arches hung,
The pictured group were deeply felt and wrung—
Blent with the general tide of sound and scene—
The tear of grief, of love, of zeal serene.

At length was heard the mellow'd voice of age:
That voice express'd a soul as mild as sage:—
"O when shall Hell's dread monster be restrain'd?
When the wide Canaan of this earth be gain'd?
Still stands the promise in eternal force,
The great event now speeds its boundless course.
The saints shall take the kingdom, and possess;
And curse shall die, and endless bounty bless.
Haste, haste, ye rising and descending suns,
Bring the true light that quickens as it runs;
Gives strength to sight, illuminates the blind,
And breaks the guilty horrors of the mind."

He spoke; the rising fire gleam'd from his eye,
Mantling his visage with a roseate dye.
With graceful mien he view'd the sainted throng,
And, panting, breathed the involuntary song:—

"From Albion's radiant isle his birth he drew,
Where tutor'd by his sire he quickly grew
In form so bright, detraction here could trace
The virtue, power, and faith, and bloom, and grace,
Of some great spirit, emulous as young;
True to the noble stock from which he sprung,
Learning's rough steep he climb'd as if he ran;
And his bold thought, with still-extending span,
Grasp'd at the universe, with keen desire
All truth to know, all beauty to admire.
As the young bird, nursed on the tallest rock,
Dares the dread flight, anticipates the shock
Of doubtful tempests darkly roll'd on high,
While other eaglets keep the nether sky;
So Edwin, framed for counsels, or for courts,
Or arm'd with prowess for the camp's dread sports,
Sought scenes of greatness with unflutter'd heart,
And hoped to dazzle in the noblest part.

"At length religion, with celestial charms,
Her glories blazed, and wooed him to her arms.
He saw, and own'd the characters Divine.
She bade new scenes appear, fresh suns to shine
Effulgent o'er the midnight of his mind,
And sank to shade all lights of meaner kind.
Now ceased the wild ambition of his soul;
No pride him now, no violence controul;
To heaven ascends his meek, his constant prayer:
The total worship of his heart is there.
The tide of nature, which so lately flow'd
On life's high shores, ebbs back upon its God.
Gone were the flaunting visions that delude
The high-born souls who scorn the multitude.
Far other scenes entrance the astonish'd youth;—
The bright creations of celestial truth;—
No wandering images of good and fair,
No phantoms, touchless as the passing air;
But Virtue shining from her throne sublime,
Unmoved by foe, or fate, or place, or time."

LIFE.

"What is our life?" oft-times we ask.
But look for no reply;
Still turning to some busy task,
And know not, care not why.

Thankless, we deem our life but spray
Dash'd on a barren shore,
That glitters in the sunny ray,
Then falls, and is no more.

Yet time is true eternity,
Just shaded by the grave:
The first bold billow of a sea
That knows no refluent wave.

'Tis more.—It speaks with God-like power
Our ceaseless weal or woe;
From some small fount, in life's brief hour,
These deep extremes shall flow.

Source of all blessedness and strength!
O help our weakness, Lord!
And guide us through life's little length,
That we may keep thy word.

Then on the sure foundation laid
In Zion we shall build;
And soon our final home, array'd
In light, shall stand reveal'd.

But those who shun the Rock, and think
Smooth sand the corner-stone,
Whelm'd in the tempest-crash shall sink,
Eternally undone.

THE CROSS.

Vast is the power of signs. The wither'd oak
Calls up the annals of a thousand years
To swell and satiate the reflective mind.
Yon cedar speaks of Lebanon's brown heights,
Whence in more ancient times the prophet seized
The image of his theme, in strains sublime
Hymning the glories of Messiah's reign.
But in the bleeding cross unnumber'd truths
Of boundless range and moment shine reveal'd
In mingled beams of light, as from a sun:
God reconciled, and earth transform'd to heaven;
Hell and the grave balk'd of their prey; while love,
Justice, and bliss the universe o'erflow.

THE BROKEN PITCHER.

Ah! dire event! that seems to wring
Tears from those eyes of blue:
The stricken floweret of the spring
Thus sheds its morning dew.

Could I restore each vagrant part
That multiplies thy pain,
'Twould quickly heal thy wounded heart,
And thou wouldst smile again.

List, weeping maid, in life's rough round
This tale thou oft shalt tell:—
"My vessel shiver'd on the ground
Just ere it reach'd the well."

When love's pure streams thy taste invite,
Thou on the brink dost stand,
The much-loved youth himself may smite
The pitcher from thy hand.

Meantime, while lighter shocks succeed,
Let patience still bear up;
But, maiden, chiefly learn to heed
The carrying of the cup.

And think, O think, there is a Fount
Whence living waters flow:
Like Siloa's brook, by Sion's mount,
Softly those waters go.

Yet though of the proud flood no burst
Is heard, or torrent's noise;
Those waters more shall quench thy thirst,
Than all terrestrial joys.

Drink, and these earthly rills shall seem—
Though vaunted—mean and poor;
Cease, then, to grieve! At that free stream
O drink, and thirst no more!

Then no rude accident shall wrest
From thee thy full supply;
The well, deep-seated in thy breast,
Shall spring eternally.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE.

I LOVE the dawnings of the beautiful,
The budding rose, the earliest green of spring,
The sun just entering heaven's rich vestibule,
The soonest lark when first she mounts her wing,
And the young moon at eve, whose virgin face,
Side-long reveal'd, shines with a modest grace.

Shall these give pleasure to the glowing sense,
But to the soul yield nothing more refined?
Nothing of purer touch, to recompense
The busy wonderings of the searching mind?
Yes; hues and forms are but the mystic wand
That starts the visions of her fairy-land!

For "MORE THAN MEETS THE VIEW" lies in the bloom;
The fruitage of a distant day shines there.
Twice charm'd we see the pent flower burst its tomb;
Twice, as when from the harp, swept by the air,
A soft sweet note seems sounding from on high,
That with a deeper note chimes harmony.

Thus lovelier than the beauty of her smiles,
The opening virtues rise of heaven-taught youth.
Behold, they come, first of their lengthening files,—
Sincerity, Devotion, Love, and Truth;
Like waves that break and sparkle on the shore,
Sounding the advance of many thousands more.

But, O my child, should folly blast thy flower,
Like snow in summer, it would chill my soul;
'T would seem like sun-set at the noon-tide hour;
As if the last sweet song had ceased to roll;
As if the waxing proved a waning moon;
Or Heaven in wrath resumed some matchless boon!

O no! I must not fear it; God will guide
Thy bless'd career of sanctity and joy.
The lustre of thy spring can never hide
The mellow harvest which my hopes employ;
And still I see immortal growths lie there,
In still surpassing forms of good and fair.

Bright from the Maker's hand glow'd earth and sky;
Man look'd astonishment, and joy, and love.
Again he mused, and "MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE"
Was traced on all, was sung through every grove.
Then rose the eagle vision of his soul,
Scanning the eternal purpose of the whole.

But soon a storm of crime and curse began,
Dashing the inscription from its monument;
Nay, struck the mind, and left erroneous man
To know his world, but not its true intent.
Then, as the darkness thicken'd to its height,
God spake once more,—and there was glorious light.

Thrice blessed light! whose many streams have found
A central sea in God's own truth reveal'd;
Whose cloudless ray can pierce the dark profound,
Where Providence her secrets has conceal'd;
Unsounded depths beneath the surface lie,
More than can ever meet a seraph's eye.

See, "I am thine!" Who yet has understood
The illimitable sense of these brief sounds?
Writ by the pen of God, confirm'd with blood
Drawn from his own immedicable wounds,
In these small, charmless characters is given
The eternal charter of our highest heaven.

How small to sense!—a touch conceals the line;
To faith how more than infinite the thought!
Deed of Adoptive Love! seal'd by Divine,
By rapturous joy, that sets earth's joys at nought;
A gem whose ray now lights this cave of care,
Whose price in heaven will purchase kingdoms there.

O do not scorn the ungraceful type that stains
With misty hue its dark and tatter'd page:
Read me the words, I envy not the strains
Of every Orpheus of this tuneful age.
Show me the line, and let a Newton fly
Enraptured through his planetary sky.

Then look, my soul, not on the narrow field
Of this low weedy world; lift up thine eye;
Pursue the ever-lengthening vale; and yield
Thy homage to the mountains; there descry,
At every new ascent, still nobler heights,
Feasting thy hopes with infinite delights.

These give celestial temper to the soul,
To meanest things of earth a sweep sublime;
Urge us to rush upon the eternal goal,
Till Death himself shall die, and hoary Time
Take youth's bright form, his night turn into day,
Dwell in new worlds, and cast his wings away.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD:

WHO, WHILE APPARENTLY IN POSSESSION OF HIS USUAL HEALTH AND VIVACITY, EXPIRED IN A MOMENT.

Why dimm'd so suddenly, thou beauteous gem?
My angel, why, O why so quickly flown?
The branch is sever'd from its living stem,
Before the fruit is seen, or blossom blown.

Thou wast, my son, a pleasant child to me;
But now that pleasure is transform'd to pain:
The smile, the kiss, the clasp of love, from thee,
Will never glad thy mother's heart again.

I look—thou heed'st me not—thy bright blue eyes,
For ever closed, speak not their wonted joy;
I weep—thou hear'st not my distressful cries—
Thy mother's tears warm not her clay-cold boy.

But we forget, thou art immortal now :
Thou hast at once thy noblest manhood gain'd ;
And, shooting to perfection's loftiest brow,
Shunn'st the slow path of youth by folly stain'd.

What, though the music of thy lispings here
No more shall charm the family around ;
Thy language now—O might it reach our ear !—
Earth's low sublime transcends, with sweeter sounds.

These tiny vestures—needless now !—are changed
For living robes, insufferably bright ;
The toys, o'er which thy fancy oft has ranged,
For high pursuits, through countless worlds of light.

Yet thee we mourn, struck from a parent's care,
A sister's fondness, and a brother's love ;
But while we sigh, faith joys to see thee share
The friendships of thy Father's house above.

Nor art thou wholly from thy kindred fled ;
Thy infant sisters,* now like thee mature,
Shout from the skies, " Well has our brother sped !
Of heaven, of God, eternally secure ! "

Sweet smiling band of sainted ones ! you draw
True knowledge from its pure and living Fount ;
Ye know each other, touch'd by love's great law ;
Ye know the adoring throngs on Zion's mount.

The body, too, waked by the Voice Divine,
Shall start to life, a glorious, deathless thing ;
The diamond thus, that slumber'd in the mine,
Now burns upon the bosom of a king.

Farewell awhile ! For we by faith aspire
To mount, and mingle with your spotless train :
And as affection fans the warm desire,
Hope swells the joy,—that we shall meet again.

TO A YOUNG LADY.

Is FRIENDSHIP, to thy young and gen'rous heart,
The sweetest flower that scents this weary waste ?
A landscape breathing balm in every part ?
A sunny scene of ocean at his rest ?

* Alluding to three infants who had died before this time.

Ah! some rude foot may crush that beauteous flower;
The plain may wither to the beating storm;
And the fierce hurricane assume his power,
Shaking the flood in many a dreadful form.

There *is*—O what unfathomable joy
Sounds from that syllable!—There is A FRIEND
Whose well-tried love and truth, in heaven, employ
Unnumber'd harps with songs that ne'er shall end:

A matchless Friend! Doubt not his power;—behold
Those pond'rous globes careering in the sky:
Would'st thou the friendship of his *heart* were told?
On Calvary see him bleed, and faint, and die.

THE LORD'S DAY.

LORD, it is ours when it is thine;
Thy love has made it all Divine,
That we thy love may know:
The day we in thy praise employ
Is ours—thy gift—and we enjoy
A Paradise below.

Thus if at noon he veils his beams,
The wearied sun, as fancy dreams,
Sinks to his fleecy bed;
And while for rest his orb retires,
That cloud abates his fiercest fires,
And screens the reaper's head.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

JESUS, whom wicked bands betray,
Condemn'd, is dragg'd to death away!
Think, O my soul, think on that day,
Look on Mount Calvary!
Behold him, lamb-like, led along,
Surrounded by a wicked throng,
Accused by every lying tongue,
See, the meek Lamb of God is hung
Upon the blood-stain'd tree!

'T was thus the glorious Sufferer stood,
With hands and feet nail'd to the wood;
From every wound a stream of blood
Came trickling down amain:

His bitter groans all nature struck,
His voice the rock in fragments broke;
And sleeping saints their graves forsook;
While spiteful Jews deride and mock,
And laugh at all his pain.

Suspended between earth and skies,
Behold him trembling as he dies!
O sinners, hear his mournful cries!
O think how sad his pain!
The noon-day sun withdraws his light,
Shock'd and confounded at the sight.
The darkness spreads a horrid night;
All nature shiver'd with affright,
When Christ the Lord was slain.

Hear, heaven and earth, the eternal Son!
"Father," he cries, "thy will be done!"
He treads the wine-press all alone,
His garments stain'd with blood!
O hear that bitter, bitter cry,
"ELI LAMA SABACHTHANI!"
But when in death he hides his eye,
He soon shall mount above the sky—
The conquering Son of God.

Romans and Jews, a desperate band,
With hearts like steel around him stand,
Shouting, "If strong to save our land,
Come down, thyself make free!"
Pierced by a soldier as he died,
Again long streams flow'd from his side;
And thus my Lord was crucified:
Stern Justice now is satisfied,
Sinners, for you and me.

Behold him on a throne of state,
He fills the mediatorial seat,
While millions, bowing at his feet,
In loud Hosannas tell
How he endured his mortal pains,
And dragg'd even death and hell in chains;
Ye seraphs, raise your highest strains;
Let music fill bright Salem's plains;
He conquers death and hell!

"'Tis done, the dreadful debt is paid,
The great atonement now is made;
Sinners, on me your guilt was laid,
For you I spilt my blood.

For you my tender soul did move ;
For you I left the courts above,
That you the length and breadth might prove,
The height and depth, of sovereign love,
The unknown love of God."

All glory be to God on high,
Who reigns enthroned above the sky,
Who sent his Son to bleed and die,
Glory to God be given !
While heaven above his praise resounds,
Soon as the soul has burst its bounds,
I hope to sing eternal rounds
Of flowing love which knows no bounds,
When carried up to heaven.

LINES WRITTEN IN A YOUNG LADY'S ALBUM.

Go, little book, say to her friends,—
" My mistress loves you well ;
May I, the messenger she sends,
Presume her wish to tell ?

" Some small memorial of your worth,
Some signal she would sue,
By which her fancy may call forth
The writers to the view :

" Some salutary truth, distill'd
Pure from the pious mind :
Some canticle, or grave, or fill'd
With strains of joy refined :

" Some vision of the limner's art,—
A face, a field, or flower :
Some symbol wisdom to impart,—
A tomb or heaven-struck tower :

" Some oracle Divine, a choice
To suit her youthful prime :
Some prayer to bless her path, the voice
Of Charity sublime.

" With these adorn'd, my faithful page
Shall gratefully proclaim,
Perchance, through some far-distant age,
Your virtue and your name."

FRAGMENT.*

With song, and symphony, and bold acclaim,
While evening smiles, the festive plains resound;
And many a bard receives a deathless fame,
His blushing brows with greenest garlands bound.
The bards an equitable meed have found:—
Yet nobler themes demand their noblest line;
A harp of holier, of sublimer sound
Might tempt the hand can move with free design,
To seize the o'erwhelming strain that rolls through realms Divine.

That strain is love, the loftiest of the sky,
The seraph's glow, the archangel's raptured zeal,
The generous joy of all who dwell on high,
Shouting in chorus man's eternal weal:
And he who gives the spheres their measured wheel
Strikes the deep notes of universal love,
Leads on those tuneful orbs, whose loud appeal,
When listless man, nor hell, nor heaven can move,
This globe responsive hears, and countless worlds above.

Come, then, ye happy few, whom sacred song
Can move to ecstasies of solemn joy,
Haste from the precincts of the busy throng,
To some lone vale where tumults ne'er annoy,
There let immortal grace your thought employ,
To wound and soothe your sympathy of heart;
Rich is the feeling and without alloy,
Which kindling charities Divine impart,
And Pity's keen delight exalts the pleasing smart.

Oft such as you have cheer'd the venturous theme,
The dread attempt to sound celestial strings;
Thus, not alone some youthful poet's dream
Is cheer'd, but Milton's potent voice that sings
Glad news of ransom from the infernal chain,
The conflicts of the broken heart that springs
On Hope's soft pinions, and the mingling train
Of triumphs and of spoils, that crown Messiah's reign.

To thee I look, Eternal Sun, whose ray
Of infinite intelligence can show
The deeps of time, or light the imperial way
To Truth's bright worlds remote, or from below
Direct the wandering thought to fields that grow

* This, and the three following pieces, appear to have been intended as parts of a poem on the subject of St. Xavier's Mission, the argument of which was laid out, but the scheme was abandoned many years since.

Flowers of unearthly hues, and lovelier far
Than yet in heaven's own Paradise can blow,
The mind still mounting, 'bove the scenes that are,
To Beauty's self, more bright than shines yon noon-day star.

To thee I look, though fearful, yet in hope
Thou wilt not scorn thy suppliant's warm desire;
O lead the song straight to its destined scope,
Let wisdom teach, let virtue's flame inspire;
That with some little spark of heavenly fire,
The trembling voice presumptive may record,
While emulous responds the sacred lyre,
Some deeds of one who bared the mystic sword
Of truth Divine through lands usurp'd by hell's dread lord.

* * * * * * * * *

MORN.

The dawn had glimmer'd o'er the wave;
Resplendent from his watery grave
In triumph rose the sun,
The tidings of his joy to tell,
With smiles on mount, and cliff, and dell,
And, slanting through the rocky cell,
His beauteous way he won.

The sea-mew, circling, nears the land,
The lark's glad wing o'erhangs the strand,
And harmony resounds:
The lion now has lost his ire;
Subdued his eye of generous fire,
He looks, while listing Nature's lyre,
O'er all the happy bounds.

Who knows the tranquil joys of prime,
And blesses not the heavenly time,
The hour that wakes the soul;
Loves not the very name of morn,
The scene which pencill'd dews adorn,
And song that chants, on rapture borne,
The seasons as they roll?

PERSECUTION.

Sinks now the goodliest plant,
Struck by the unfeeling blast;
Its beauteous branches soil'd and rent,
And withering fast.

Well, the Great Husbandman
Will lift them yet on high,
To enjoy, beyond life's wintry span,
A happier sky.

My own dear children, rent,
Loud shrieking, from my arms,
Pierced by the sword, cease now to vent
Their shrill alarms.
Distraction, hence! I know
A better mood than thine;
That soothes my grief, yet bids to flow
These tears of mine.

Time was when this dread scene,
Sanguined with blood so dear,
Me could have moved to sorrow keen,
Vengeance, and fear.
But, O what power is this
That rules my labouring breast,
Softens and nerves, gives pain and bliss,
Rapture and rest?

Death speeds the flying hour,
Like racer near the goal:
Tyrant, I know thy feeble power
Dares not the soul.
Yet as I will not fear,
So let me cease to scorn
The cloud where dawns, bright in the rear,
The eternal morn.

O happy, happy day!
My soul, extend thy wing:
Now 'scape this prison-house of clay,
And soar and sing:
To faith new powers are given:
See, streaming on the sight,
The Triune Majesty of heaven
On thrones of light.

There shines our faithful Lord,
Prince of the martyr'd host.
"Come," he proclaims, (O joyful word!)
"To heaven's fair coast."
"Come," suddenly resounds
From all the immortal band:—
I come, even now on life's dark bounds,
At thy command.

Nature, thou beauteous frame,—
Our mansion, and our grave,—
Thou too shalt lose thy charms and name
In ruin's wave:
Farewell!—Yet once again,
Upraised I shall survey
Thy form glow with dissolving flame,
In that great day.

A FRAGMENT.

The sun look'd through the region wide,
Robed in the majesty of morn;
Ocean impell'd his pond'rous tide,
While twinkling waves, the view to adorn,
Roll'd toward the distant shore with ceaseless chide,
Check'd by the frequent bark, high-bounding in her pride.

But 't was the landscape charm'd the sight,
Sprung beauteous from the dark of night,
As if again, "Let there be light,"
The Eternal had proclaim'd.
To Figen's mount, where clouds repose,
The kingdoms of an empire rose,
Fair as the fields where Ganges flows,
By eastern poets famed.

ALFRED'S ODE TO ST. PAUL.

"Harp of celestial themes, awake!
To solemn joys lift all thy powers;
And sweetly may thy thunders shake
The soul, as fly the swift-wing'd hours.
Touch'd by the potency of sound,
Truth shows more true, more beauteous, more profound.
The sunny scenes of life take lovelier forms;
Sublime, but musical, the storms.
Resentment breaks his brandish'd sword, subdued,
With all his wrathful train, by thy soft spell;
Infuriate with unconquerable feud,
Foul Hate flies murmuring to his native hell.
With tears that smile, see, trooping to thy song,
The Virtues robed from heaven, a bright and blissful throng.

"Hence, Adulation, fawning slave!
Obscenity, all-veil'd, away!
And Folly, dancing to the grave,
Fly!—tenfold curse awaits your stay.

Too oft ye desecrate the lyre,
Mingling with sweetest sounds unhallow'd fire.
Behold a harp unstain'd, whose cheerful chime
Ne'er echoed to a godless rhyme.
Let but the fitful breeze salute the strings,
And 'God is love, and love is God,' resound,
In strains responsive and sweet lingerings,
Like voices heard when Eden bloom'd around.
Come, powerful Empress of the throbbing breast,
What hero shall we sing, the greatest and the best ?"

Shouts thus the song in Athelingay,
Isle of the noble and the good;
The courtly towers, and convent gray,
Roll back the echo to the wood.
Thone swiftly winds his destined course;
Along his flowery banks—all hostile force
Dropp'd for the gentle mood—the Warrior-band,
With noble Thanes and Prelates stand.
In greatness throned, in fame that cannot fade,
The royal Saxon sat, and doff'd his steel;
Who in the verities of faith had laid
The deep foundations of Britannia's weal.
Burning the triumphs of that faith to tell,
Like Jesse's son he seem'd, and snatch'd the sounding shell :—

"In famed Cilicia's happy clime,
Where Cydnus flows through boundless plains,
The child of destiny sublime
Was nursed amid the classic fanes
Of Tarsus, city of the sage,
Where Science yet unroll'd her beaming page.
Him hoary Wisdom call'd her darling son,
And show'd the steps that must be won.
And from the hills and forests, Genius of song,
Thou wouldst, with measured pace, attend the youth
And stream upon his melting soul thy strong,
Thy soft, thy searching melody of truth.
But chiefly sacred seers kindled his joy,
And prophets throng'd to train the consecrated boy.

"The seasons fly—but time gives more
Than motion measured by the spheres;
Draws from his deep and secret store
His magical effect of years.
He bids bright gems of lambent light
In ocean-caves dawn on their long, dark night.

Behold a cot where shepherds tune the reed,—
'T is now imperial Rome which nations hail.
Does science flourish fair? He sow'd the seed
In early Greece, and Egypt's ancient vale.
From infancy he brings, with gradual ray,
The bright and burning noon of intellectual day.

"As eaglets fly their native rock,
Plumed for no middle heights of air,
The manly youth began to mock
The toys that took his childish care;
And, studious on the grassy sod,
Pants for the tribes and temple of his God.
Granted the wish—On Zion's sacred steep
He lifts the hymn to God mighty to save;
To Salem gives a soul rich as the deep,
Soft as the surf, and daring as the wave.
In glory's high career when shall he find
Some task of matchless strength, meet for so vast a mind?

"Amazing light! no gradual dawn—
Another sun bursts on the sky!
What waves of glory sweep the lawn!
The mountains flame their tops on high.
Hung on the wing, those lightnings stay,
Fire Syria's tower, and quench our earthly day.
Struck to the ground, roll'd on his groaning steed—
His bold compeers trembling with sore affright,—
He hears a voice—he feels a power succeed,
Kindling his inmost soul with heavenly light,
Sees Truth's all-conquering sceptre brightly shine,
And whom he once despised, now worships as Divine.

"Strike loftily the answering lyre—
But what his greatness whom we sing?
Rules he the battle in his ire?
Or sits enthroned a glittering king?
Or moves he with a nobler throng—
The raptured sons of science and of song?
How mean the form that shrouds that soul sublime!
Behold, he seeks the concourse of the poor!
Mankind abhor him, as if loathsome crime
And curse lay at his miserable door!
Blind to those virtues of eternal fame
That crowd and smile around, to see him spurn the shame."

* * * * * * * * *

THE TWENTY-FIRST OF JUNE.

THE sun, throned high in summer-state prolongs
His annual visit to the snowy north,
Pleased with the grateful worship of sweet songs,
Which from each icy vale his beams call forth;
But now its tide of light has reach'd its bound,
Now ebbs, and wintry shades again shall gather round.

In heaven's unfading year we too shall sing
The living light of a diviner Sun;
But gorgeous summer there shall be the spring
Of richer summers—winter there is none;
No cloud, no gloom shall veil the bright, bright skies,
Through that long day of rest, and loftiest enterprise.

If thence the summons thrill the good man's ear,
How ardently he greets his glorious fate!
His fleshy mantle drops, wipes his last tear,
Ascends, and, shooting through heaven's utmost gate,
Where angels oft in ecstasy have roved,
Shouts, "O to see HIS face! to love and be beloved!"

A FRAGMENT.

I HAVE seen the blue stream at the base
Of a smooth sunny bank running by,
And the lake give the sun's bright rays
As he flash'd from an evening sky.
I have seen the green vale, and the hill
With its flocks on the skirts of a cloud,
And the plain with its tower and its mill,
And the grove with its thrush singing loud.

But here shines the broad ocean-swell,
And my soul loves to mount with the billow.
Yes, wild wave! I have loved thee well,
Uprolling, or droop'd like a willow.
'T is no airy vision is seen,
Nor Beauty in smiles in her bower;
But Nature erect like a queen
Looking forth from the throne of her power.

The Isle seems to rush to the Main,
Her warrior-companion to meet;
And the bold flowing tide falls again
In the homage of waves at her feet.

Proud union of strength for the war,
And rich with the blessings of peace !
Yet the huge rocks must melt, and the roar
Of the waters of ages shall cease.

I have journey'd, yet what now to me
The bright scenes that have rush'd from my sight ?
But, O ! what a flood shall I see
Stretching onward from life's latest height !

* * * * * * * * *

THE END.

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